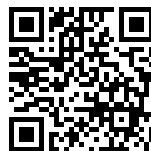


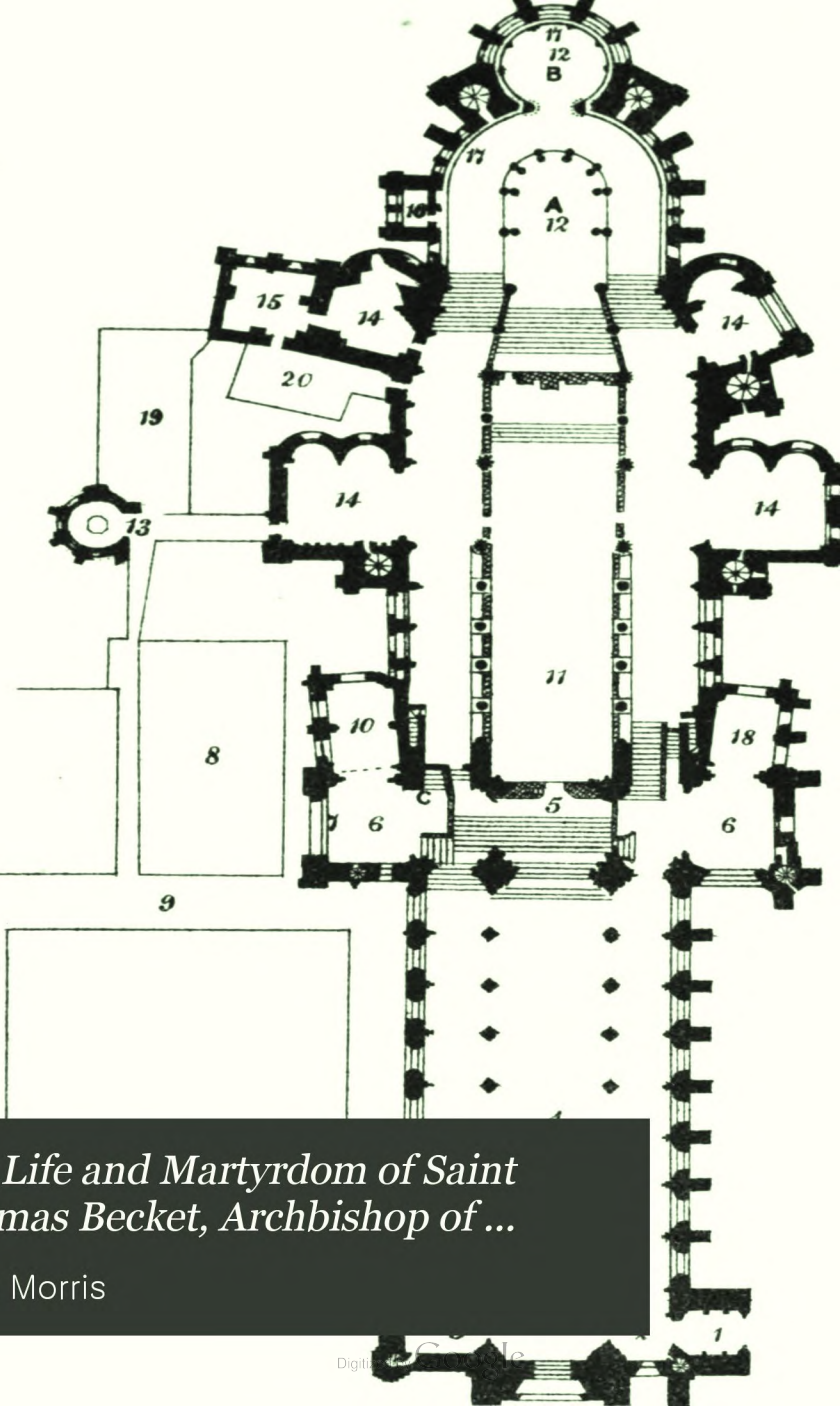
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*The Life and Martyrdom of Saint  
Thomas Becket, Archbishop of ...*

John Morris

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**ST. THOMAS BECKET.**

ROEHAMPTON :  
PRINTED BY JAMES STANLEY.

THE  
LIFE AND MARTYRDOM  
OF  
SAINT THOMAS BECKET,  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION.

BY  
JOHN MORRIS,  
PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

*Crimen nostrum est assertio ecclesiasticæ libertatis; eam namque  
profiteri læsæ majestatis reatus sub persecutore nostro est.*

ST. THOMAS TO STEPHEN, CHANCELLOR OF SICILY.

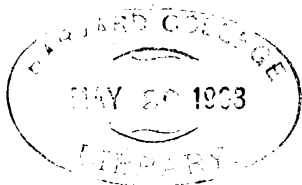
BURNS AND OATES,	
LONDON:	NEW YORK:
GRANVILLE MANSIONS,	CATHOLIC PUBLICATION SOCIETY CO.,
ORCHARD STREET, W.	BARCLAY STREET.

1885.



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## PLAN OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

IN THE TIME OF ST. THOMAS,

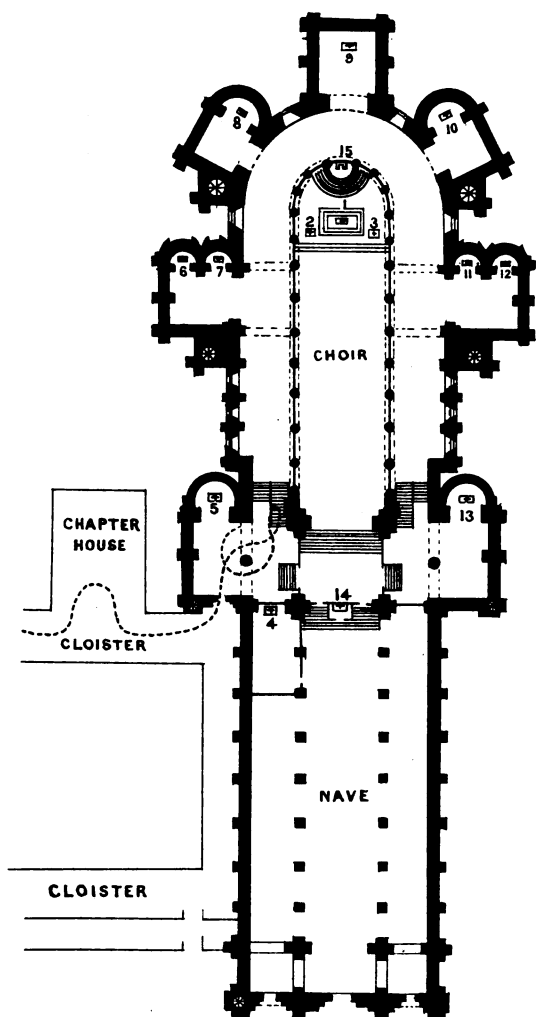
*reduced from Willis and Stanley.*

It may be permissible to express a doubt whether these authorities are correct in giving a square end to the chapel of the Blessed Trinity. Built as it was by Prior Conrad, in the time of St. Anselm, it will surely have ended in an apse.

The course taken by St. Thomas at his martyrdom is marked by the dotted line. It will be seen that at the last he was so close to the altar of St. Benedict, that when he fell on his right side, or to the north, he must have been before the altar. The apses still remaining in the eastern transepts show how near the altar was to the line of the transept wall.

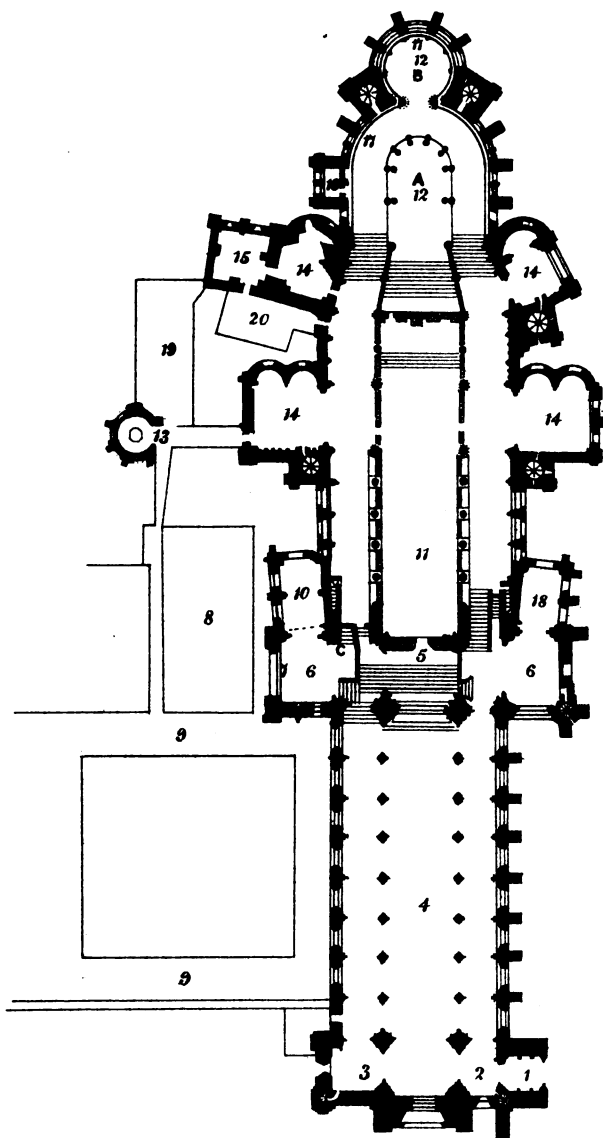
### ALTARS.

1. Christ's, or the High Altar; below, in the Crypt, Our Lady Undercroft.
2. St. Elphege's
3. St. Dunstan's
4. The Lady Altar.
5. St. Benedict, with St. Blaise above.
6. St. Martin, with St. Mary Magdalene below.
7. St. Stephen, with St. Nicholas below.
8. St. Andrew, with Holy Innocents below.
9. B. Trinity, between the shrines of St. Wilfrid on the north and St. Odo on the south, with the altars of St. John Baptist and St. Augustine below.
10. SS. Peter and Paul, afterwards St. Anselm, with St. Gabriel below.
11. St. John the Evangelist, with St. Paulinus below.
12. St. Gregory, with St. Ouen and before it St. Catherine below.
13. St. Michael, with All Saints above.
14. Holy Cross on the steps at the head of the nave.
15. The Patriarchal Chair.









THE PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE IN THE CATHEDRAL BEFORE  
THE REFORMATION.

- A. The Shrine and Altar of St. Thomas: his tomb below in the Crypt.
- B. The Crown of St. Thomas.
- C. The Altar at the Sword's Point.

APPROXIMATE DATES OF THE PRESENT BUILDING.

Taken from *Christ Church, Canterbury; a Chronological Conspectus of the existing Architecture.* By W. A. Scott Robertson, Hon. Can. 1881.

- 1. South porch, 1422.
- 2. Oxford Steeple, 1440 to 1452.
- 3. North West Tower, 1832 to 1834.
- 4. Nave, 1379 to 1400.
- 5. Central Tower, 1495 to 1503.
- 6. Western Transepts, 1382 to 1400.
- 7. Stained glass in north window of Martyrdom, 1470 to 1480.
- 8. Chapter House: doorway and arcading, 1304.  
Windows and roof, 1382 to 1400.
- 9. Cloisters: Vaulting and screens, 1397 to 1412.  
North wall, mural arcading, two doorways  
and triple arcading of doorway into  
Martyrdom, 1226 to 1236.  
Doorway into Martyrdom, inserted 1486  
to 1489.
- 10. Lady Chapel (Dean's Chapel), 1449 to 1468.
- 11. Choir arcades and vaulting to east end of Eastern Transepts, and upper portion of exterior walls of Choir (William of Sens), 1175 to 1178. Crypt, 1096 to 1100.
- 12. Trinity Chapel and Becket's Crown, with crypts beneath them (William the Englishman), 1179 to 1184.  
Black Prince's chantries in the crypt, 1370 to 1379.
- 13. Baptistry, lower part, 1165, upper, 1397 to 1412.
- 14. Choir aisles, Eastern Transepts, St. Andrew's and St. Anselm's Chapels, 1100 to 1115.
- 15. Treasury, now Vestry of Dean and Chapter, 1135 to 1165.
- 16. Henry IV.'s Chantry, 1425 to 1435.
- 17. Stained glass in two windows of north aisle of Choir, three lights in Trinity Chapel north aisle, and in central window of Becket's Crown, 1226 to 1236.
- 11. St. Michael's Chapel (Somerset or Warrior Chapel), 1397 to 1412.





## PREFACE.

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THE first edition of this book was published in 1859, and for twenty years it has been out of print. In this interval much has been done to promote a knowledge of the life of St. Thomas of Canterbury. Six volumes have appeared in the Rolls Series, entitled *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, admirably edited by the late Canon James Craigie Robertson. Unfortunately the collection is not yet complete, and it would have been very greatly to the advantage of the present work, if at least the concluding volume of the letters had been published. In 1859 the only edition of the biographies and of the cor-

respondence accessible, excepting that of Lupus, was the voluminous but incorrect and confused edition published by Dr. Giles. To that edition all references then were necessarily made, but now they have all been carefully transferred to the Rolls edition, as far as it extends.

The student of the life of St. Thomas, when using the letters as edited by Dr. Giles, was absolutely without assistance in the chronology. All who have the pleasure of working with Canon Robertson's edition in their hands, have the advantage derived from the chronological order in which the letters are arranged, together with the help given by most painstaking and intelligent editing. The labour of comparing the whole life of St. Thomas with the Rolls edition has been considerable, but it has been well repaid by the correction of some errors, and of one important disorder in the chronology.

In addition to the help derived from Canon Robertson's edition of the original documents, two or three further errors have been now rectified, which were pointed out by him in his *Becket, a Biography*.

Each successive volume of the *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, has given a full account of the authors of the various biographies there published. The editor reserved to the close of his labours the necessary work of arranging these writers in their proper order, as that followed by him in the publication of the volumes was quite arbitrary. This purpose he did not live to carry into effect, but the work has since been excellently done by Mr. Eirikr Magnusson, sub-librarian of the University of Cambridge, in his Preface to the *Thomas Saga Erkebyskups*, also in the Rolls Series. That order has been adopted in the following account of the biographers of St. Thomas.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. xix.

A fresh set of notes in the Appendix, and the insertion of much matter that after the publication of the first edition was inserted by the present writer in the *Dublin Review* for November 1860, have made this new edition half as large again as its predecessor.

The statements in this book are to be regarded as resting on the authority of one or more of the nine biographers of St. Thomas first mentioned in the following account of them; and it has not been thought necessary to burden the pages of the work with references to show from which of them each statement has been derived. All other authorities, and more particularly the letters, are quoted throughout the book.

## THE BIOGRAPHERS OF ST. THOMAS.

---

THE life of St. Thomas of Canterbury is exceptionally well known. More than seven hundred years have elapsed since he died, and yet his history stands out before us with a distinctness and minuteness that is extremely rare among the records of great men. The witnesses to the facts are both numerous and trustworthy. They wrote of matters of which they had personal knowledge, and their writings were in the hands of those who were the most capable of judging of their truthfulness. The universal and vehement interest taken in all that concerned St. Thomas, while later on it may have caused an embroidery of legends to be attached to his name, would ensure attention to the minutest details while the story was yet fresh, and this is a guarantee for accuracy and care. The substantial agreement of several writers, evidently independent of one another, is a further assurance of fidelity. The personal character of the writers is above suspicion, and their ability manifest; and lastly, all that skilful editing can do for them has happily been done, and that too at the public expense.

I. Benedict, a monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, is said by the editor of the *Quadrilogue* (about 1220) to have been on the day of the martyrdom among the Saint's more intimate friends, and to have recorded those things of which he was an ear or eye witness. He wrote only of the martyrdom and of the subsequent miracles. No copy of his narrative of the martyrdom exists, but considerable fragments have been preserved in the *Quadrilogue*. The miracles are now in six books. Of these the last two are by another hand, as events are there related which happened after Benedict's death. He died in 1193 or 1194 at Peterborough, of which house he was made abbot in 1177. The fourth book of miracles is of about the date of Benedict's election as Abbot of Peterborough, for it mentions the great fire at Rochester, which occurred in the April of that year. But the work is not in strict chronological order, for after the passage relating to the fire, a letter is inserted addressed to Odo as Prior of Canterbury; but Odo was made Abbot of Battle, and Benedict himself became Prior of Canterbury in 1175. The first three books of miracles, according to Mr. Magnusson, formed the original volume, and all that is related in them happened during the seventeen months that followed the martyrdom. In July, 1172, William was charged to record the miracles in addition to Benedict, who had fulfilled that office from the beginning. By this fact Mr. Magnusson ingeniously dates not Benedict only but Fitzstephen. For Fitzstephen

says that there was a Codex which was read in the Chapter at Canterbury, which related the miracles wrought in England, and he adds that those in France, Ireland, and elsewhere had as yet no historian. This Codex was Benedict's volume, ending then with the third book; and Mr. Magnusson concludes that Benedict's three books were written before Fitzstephen's *Life of St. Thomas*; and further that Fitzstephen wrote before William of Canterbury began, that is within the first seventeen months. The argument is pressed perhaps a little too closely, as there would be but one Codex until William had made some progress with his work. Afterwards Gervase speaks of two volumes of miracles, Benedict's and William's, and the mention of one by Fitzstephen may fairly be taken to mean that there then was but one.

Mr. Magnusson gives a second indication of the date of Benedict's volume. In the second book of the miracles Benedict quotes a letter from Robert of Cricklade, Prior of St. Frideswide's, Oxford, narrating the cure of a hurt in his leg that he had received about twelve years before in Sicily. The register of St. Frideswide's (now in C.C.C. Oxford), evidently written by this Prior, says that Pope Adrian IV. confirmed the privileges of St. Frideswide's. Assuming this confirmation to be what took Robert of Cricklade abroad, the lapse of twelve years from the time of Adrian IV., who reigned from 1154 to 1159, would bring us no later than 1171-72, as the date of the letter to Benedict;



and this date tallies with the conclusion drawn from Fitzstephen.

II. William Fitzstephen gives his own credentials.

I was the fellow-citizen of my lord, his cleric, and one of his household. Called by himself to a share of his anxieties, I was dictator in his chancery; when he sung Mass, I was the subdeacon of his chapel; when he sat to hear causes, I read the letters and documents that were presented; and I conducted some causes at his bidding. I was present with him at the Council of Northampton, where matters were transacted of such high importance; I saw his martyrdom at Canterbury; and of many other things which are here written I was an eye and ear witness, while others, again, I learnt from those who witnessed them.

There is a very curious point connected with Fitzstephen's book. The life is as favourable to St. Thomas as any of the others, but it is not alluded to by any of them; and more remarkable still, Fitzstephen himself is not mentioned once, though at least on two very important occasions he was by St. Thomas's side. Though Herbert of Bosham professes to give a full list of the Saint's companions, and mentions several who had far less to do with him than Fitzstephen, of Fitzstephen himself he says nothing. Mr. Magnusson would account for this singular silence by supposing that Fitzstephen's work, though written one of the first, was not published till after the death of Henry II., of whom he speaks

with much severity. He considers that Mr. Foss, in his *Judges of England*, has succeeded in identifying Fitzstephen with a person of that name who was made Sheriff of Gloucestershire in the first year after the death of St. Thomas, and afterwards acted as Judge itinerant, probably till his death in 1191. But though this might in some way account for the silence of the other writers about Fitzstephen's book, how would it account for their making no mention whatever of himself? Somé little mystery still attaches to the circumstance.

III. John of Salisbury is placed third by Mr. Magnusson, because Roger of Pontigny refers to two books only, John's, who was not yet a Bishop, and Benedict's, who was then Prior of Canterbury. As Benedict became Prior in 1175 and John was made Bishop of Chartres in 1176, this times the book with much exactness. It is unnecessary to give here any summary of the life of this most distinguished scholar, as his name appears frequently in the following pages. He was an invaluable friend to St. Thomas, and an honest and trusted admonitor.

IV. Edward Grim, a secular clerk of Cambridge, was present at the martyrdom, and has become famous by his having been wounded in defence of the Saint. His life, which bears a strong resemblance to Garnier's and Roger's, was finished after 1175 and before 1177, as he speaks of Benedict as Prior.

V. Roger of Pontigny was probably the author of the Life which is printed as anonymous by

Canon Robertson. Mr. Magnusson leans to the opinion that it really is Roger's, and Canon Robertson hardly thinks it improbable. Thomas of Froidmont says that the Saint had as his attendant at Pontigny a monk named Roger. The writer of this life was at Pontigny when St. Thomas arrived there, and he speaks of the monks of Pontigny as his brethren. He writes as a foreigner, translating Garnier's *en Engleterre* by *in partibus illis*, and explaining that hides of land are so called *patrio nomine*. He once writes *Lundrensis* for *Londoniensis*, which an Englishman would not have done. He mentions John of Salisbury as a distinguished man, but not as Bishop, and Benedict as Prior, which gives 1175-76 as the date of the book. The writer tells us that he was ordained priest by St. Thomas. That he had Garnier before him as he wrote is shown by his rendering *tutus et capuciatus*, where *tutus* has no meaning, for Garnier's description of St. Thomas's falling into the millstream *tut encha-peronez*, "with his hood completely over his head." This seems to show that Mr. Magnusson has dated the book a little too early, for Garnier's Life was not finished till 1176.

VI. William of Canterbury entered the monastery of Christ Church during St. Thomas's exile, and he was admitted to the habit and ordained deacon by the Saint a few days before the martyrdom. He was present in the Cathedral at the martyrdom, and he ran up into the choir in fright when he heard Fitzurse call out "Strike, strike!"

William wrote a Life of St. Thomas, in addition to his collection of miracles. With the exception of the passages from the Life extracted by the compiler of the *Quadrilogue*, this book was entirely unknown until it was published by Canon Robertson, in part in the *Archæologia Cantiana*, and in full in the Rolls Series. The manuscript is the only remaining book of those bequeathed by William of Wykeham to his College at Winchester. In his will he speaks of it as "the book on the Life of St. Thomas, called *Thomas*."

At the end of seventeen months after the martyrdom, William was set aside to help Benedict in the compilation of the miracles, and his book when written was preferred, even by Benedict himself, to Benedict's own. William was sent, with his book, to King Henry at the King's request, but he must have reckoned on the improbability of its being read by the King, or translated to him literally, for there are many things in it that would not have pleased him. Again and again William blames the invasion of Ireland, as<sup>1</sup> "disquieting without cause unarmed neighbours, a people, which though uncivilized and barbarous, honours the true faith and observes the Christian religion." The King's visit to Canterbury when he asked for the book was in 1174, and the work seems to have been finished shortly after Odo's appointment as Abbot of Battle in 1175. The Life is thought to have been written in the following year.

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, i. p. 364.

VII. Garnier de Pont S. Maxence, or, as he calls himself, "Guernes li clers, de Punt de Saint Mesence nez," wrote in French verse his Life of St. Thomas between the second and the sixth years after the martyrdom. In return for his poem he received from "l'abesse, suer saint Thomas," Mary, who became Abbess of Barking in 1173, a palfrey with its trappings; and, as to the Nuns of Barking, he says:

et les dames m'ont fet tut gras  
chescune d'eles de sun dun.

The following verses will give a further specimen of the language and versification, while at the same time they are interesting as giving the date of the composition of the Life and its claim to credit:

Guernes li clers del Punt fine ici sun sermun  
del martir saint Thomas e de sa passiun.  
e mainte feiz le fist à la tumbe al barun.  
ci n'a mis un sul mot se la verité nun.  
de ses mesfaiz li face li plus deus ueir pardun.

Ainc mais si bons romanz ne fu faiz ne trouez.  
à Cantorbire fu e faiz e amendez.  
n'i admis un sul mot qui ne seit ueritez.  
li vers est d'une rime en cinc clauses cuplez.  
mis languages est bons: car en France fui nez.

L'an secund que li sainz fu en iglise ocis,  
comenchai cest romanz et mult m'en entremis.  
des priuez saint Thomas la verité apris,  
mainte feiz en ostai co que io ainz ecris,  
pur oster la menconge. al quart an fin i mis.

Garnier was edited by Immanuel Bekker (Berlin, 1838), and again by M. Hippeau of Caen

(Paris, chez Auguste Aubry, 1859). The last volume of the Rolls Series of *Materials for the Life of Archbishop Thomas Becket* is to contain the French lives.

VIII. Alan, originally a monk of Christ Church, went to Benevento, whence he returned in 1174. He was made Prior of Christ Church in 1179, Abbot of Tewkesbury<sup>2</sup> in 1186, and there he died in 1202. He collected the 529 letters which Lupus published, and he wrote a Life of the Saint as a preface to them, which is headed in the Vatican MS. *Prohemium auctoris infrascriptas epistolas recolligentis*. This Life was avowedly written to supplement the short Life by John of Salisbury, and it was in existence when Herbert wrote.

IX. Herbert of Bosham is mentioned so frequently in the following pages that little need be said of him here. He wrote a Life of St. Thomas and another book called *Liber Melorum*, in a terribly prolix and wearisome style, but Herbert could not fail to tell us many interesting things, and the work could not be spared, for all its tediousness. Before the Life has far advanced, he tells us that he was writing in the fourteenth year after the martyrdom, that is, 1184, and when he was finishing his book, Pope Urban III. was Pope, who died in 1187.

X. To the nine biographers already mentioned, may be added Gervase, a monk of Christ Church

<sup>2</sup> Alban Butler, misled by Baronius, calls him Abbot of Deoche.

at Canterbury, who gives St. Thomas a large place in his chronicle. He thus excuses himself :

No one should feel weary of whatever can be told with truth of so great a martyr. His holiness excited my affection, and his kindness attracted me : he granted me the habit in the very year in which he was consecrated Archbishop ; to him I made my profession, and from his hand I received holy orders. He also appeared to a brother of mine of his own name, to whom, amongst other sweet things, he said this in secret : " I have done so much, I have done so much that the names of my monks, and of the clerics who are bound to them, might be written in the Book of Life." And when the cleric, being anxious about himself, said to the Saint : " My lord, how will it fare with myself ? " the Saint, gently smiling, laid his hand on his head and kissed him.

Gervase mentions the writers who had preceded him, Herbert, John of Salisbury, Benedict, Alan, whom he speaks of as the compiler of the volume of letters, and William of Canterbury.

XI. We owe to a very unexpected source the knowledge that St. Thomas had yet another contemporary biographer, and the information comes to us from Iceland. Robert of Cricklade, Prior of St. Frideswide's in 1154, Chancellor of Oxford in 1159, wrote a Latin Life of St. Thomas, which, forgotten in his own country, became the foundation of the Icelandic tradition respecting our English martyr. Mr. Magnusson has given us in the Rolls Series the Thomas Saga, a fourteenth century compilation, with a literal English translation and an interesting preface. He identifies

Prior Robert of "Cretel," whom the Saga quotes, with Robert of Cricklade by the letter to Prior Benedict which the Saga gives, and which is recorded by Benedict also.

The most valuable portion of the Icelandic book is naturally that which professes to be taken directly from Robert of Cricklade. Two passages we will here give relating to St. Thomas's early life, which are expressly drawn from Robert, and they, with two other short and interesting extracts, will serve to close this Introduction. These passages, which are of sufficient importance and interest to be given in full, describe the relation of the Archdeacon Thomas to Archbishop Theobald, and his devout life and chaste habits when Chancellor.

Now whereas Thomas hath spent two years amidst courtly manners, and hath passed twenty years by four, he waxeth weary with such ways of living, in that he perceiveth how, in many things, the deeds of worldly lords turn straight against the right and the honours of learned folk. He therefore betaketh himself away from such a life, and seeketh Theobald, of good memory, Archbishop of Canterbury, who hath been named already, and secureth for himself a place in his service, more through his own device and working, than by any pleading or commendation of other folk. And within a short time he so brings his affairs about, that by reason of his wisdom and lowliness and faithful service, he is counted among the foremost friends and privy counsellors of the Archbishop, yea and right worthily so indeed, for Prior Robert writeth thereon an excellent discourse, and right profitable to many, how he had both the



wisdom and the will to honour his master. The Prior witnesseth that the Archbishop was a simple man, somewhat quick of temper and not as wary of word, if his mind was stirred, as the rule of meekness utmost demandeth. His eloquence too was of a kind that much lay thereon, in most cases, how matters happened to be taken up, if he chanced to hold converse with folk of might. But against either failing the blessed Thomas setteth his good will and wisdom, in such a manner that if in any matter the Bishop happened to wax wroth, Thomas giveth forth answers all the meeker, thus appeasing the heart of his spiritual father. So also on the other hand, if the speech of the Archbishop happened to fail him in aught, Thomas hastened to succour him, and clothed it in clerkdom in such a way that at once the discourse of the Archbishop appeared like a text with a fair commentary to it. Behold him, already now, a man of excellence, both as to lowliness of heart and zealous heed of the law. Formerly he fled from the kingly court for that one reason, that he might not see the evil deeds of the lay powers against the Church; but now he serveth his master in such strength of mind, that never was there found in him any pride at all, but he was the lower before God, the higher he was before men (pp. 36, 37).

Concerning the habits of St. Thomas as Chancellor :

So Robert writes that there was a certain person, a nigh kinsman of his [Robert's] who sought the King's Court about the time in which the story goeth. He had on hand certain affairs, on the happy issue of which he deemed that much might lay. He setteth his mind, as many a man in England

now listed, on first seeing the Chancellor Thomas, to expound to him the nature of his affairs and to pray him for some furtherance thereof. Now by reason of his reaching the town not till the day is far spent, a laudable custom forbiddeth him to go before such a mighty man on a late eventide, wherefore he betaketh him to his chamber. But in early morn, already when day was a-breaking, he bestirreth himself for the carrying out of his errands. Now the way taketh such a turn, that he must needs go by a certain church, and in the twilight he soon seeth lying before the door of the temple a man prostrate in prayer even unto earth. And when as he stands bethinking him of this sight, there comes upon him, as oft-times may happen, some sneeze or a kind of coughing. And forthwith starts he who lay kneeling on the ground, and rises straightway up, then lifteth his hands up to God and thus ends his prayer, and thereupon walks away thence to his chamber. The new comer was right eager to know who of the townspeople might follow such laudable ways, and therefore he taketh an eyemark against the lifting day-brow, both of his growth and the manner of attire he wore, that he might the rather know him if he should happen to see him afterwards. Nor did that matter long await a true proof, for no sooner hath he leave to see Chancellor Thomas, than he well perceiveth that the very growth and raiment which he had noted before, belongeth to no man but to him alone; for even now Thomas putteth off his overgarment, as if he had just entered into the room. This person testified to his kinsman Robert, when he came home, what virtue and godly fear he had found in the blessed Thomas, straightway against the thinking of most people; and hence it came to pass that the Prior put this deed into his writings [on St. Thomas] (pp. 51, 53).

The name of Prior Robert is not attached to the following passage, but it is short and certainly interesting.

At the time when Stephen had become King of England, the blessed Thomas cometh home from school. He was now two and twenty years of age, slim of growth, and pale of hue, dark of hair, with a long nose and a straightly featured face; blithe of countenance was he, keen of thought, winning and loveable in all conversation, frank of speech in his discourse, but slightly stuttering in his talk,<sup>3</sup> so keen of discernment and understanding that he would always make difficult questions plain after a wise manner (p. 29).

There is one more passage that we must give, as it clears up all difficulty respecting the Danegeld.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Magnusson is the first to quote a very apposite passage from the *Leges Edwardi Confessoris*, of which the following is a translation.

Of this Danegeld all the land was quit and free, of which churches had the property or lordship, even that belonging to parish churches, and they paid nothing in its stead, for they placed greater trust in the prayers of Holy Church than in defence of arms. And this liberty had Holy Church up to the time of William the younger, who asked aid from the Barons of the whole country to keep Normandy from his brother Robert, who was going to Jerusalem. And they granted him four *sot* from every hide, not ex-

<sup>3</sup> That St. Thomas stuttered somewhat, Mr. Magnusson says, recurs in all his personal descriptions in Icelandic records, but this is borne out by no other contemporary author (Pref. p. xcvi.).

<sup>4</sup> *Infra*, p. 112.

cepting Holy Church; and when the collection of these was made, the Church protested and demanded her liberty, but it availed her nothing.

In accordance with this, Thomas Saga says:

We have read afore, how King William levied a due on all the churches in the land, in order to repay him all the costs, at which his brother Robert did depart from the land. This money the King said he had disbursed for the freedom of Jewry, and therefore it behoved well the learned folk [*i.e.*, clergy] to repay to their King. But because the King's Court hath a mouth that holdeth fast, this due continued from year to year. At first it was called Jerusalem tax, but afterwards Warfare-due, for the King to keep up an army for the common peace of the country. But at this time matters have gone so far that this due was exacted, as a King's tax, from every house, small and great, throughout England, under no other name than an ancient tax payable into the royal treasury without any reason being shown for it. This kind of proceeding Archbishop Thomas nowise liked, saying that it is by no means seemly for the King to exact such money with the some boldness as any other King's taxes, but only according as circumstances and need should require for the peace of the folk of the land; but beyond this reason there was no duty which demanded the paying of such reserve taxes (*i. p.* 139).



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THE LIFE  
OF  
ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

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CHAPTER I.

GILBERT AND MATILDA.

1117—1143.

Birth and parentage of St. Thomas—the Saracen legend—his mother's dreams—his birth and baptism—his mother's devotions—he is sent to Merton Abbey, the London schools, and Paris University—his father a Norman—he is saved from death in a mill-stream—his mother's death—he becomes clerk to the sheriffs—reminiscence of a sickness in Kent—he enters the service of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

ONE of the most conspicuous and familiar objects in the neighbourhood of London is the high hill and pointed spire of Harrow. The church, which is now so marked a feature in the landscape, has not lasted as many years as the record of the tale we are about to tell. Its predecessor was doubtless as much in harmony with its site as that which we now see, for the taste of church-builders of that age was as unfailing as if it had been an instinct. Guided by this landmark, two horsemen, in the year 1143, or thereabouts, made their way from London to the Court of Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury, which was at the archiepiscopal manor of Harrow-on-the-Hill.

B

The one was a plain serving-man, whose name was Ralph of London. The other was scarce distinguishable from him by his dress, as the simplicity of the times dictated to the son of an impoverished London merchant; but his tall handsome figure, and large bright eye, beaming with the happy anticipation of a new and congenial mode of life, his free and self-possessed seat upon his horse, and the air and bearing of a gentleman in his every movement, betrayed to an observer what the humble equipments of both and the familiarity of intercourse between them would have concealed, that the younger was the master, and the other his attendant. The somewhat awful interview with the Archbishop, on which so much depended, was postponed to the morrow; and they sought the shelter of a hostelry in Harrow. Doubtless an unusual bustle prevailed in the little village from the presence of the Archbishop with his train; still something in the appearance of our humble travellers seems to have attracted the notice of their hostess; for when the next morning came, she told her husband that she had dreamt during the night that one of the new-comers had covered their parish church with his vestments. The good man, who did not know who they were, said, "Perhaps it portends that one of them will be some day lord of this church and village." The figure which had impressed itself on the imagination of the dame was that of Thomas Becket, the future Archbishop of Canterbury and martyr.

This is by no means the only event in the early

annals of his life of an unusual character which his many contemporary biographers have placed on record. The tale, however, which is the best known connected with his parentage, is behind none of them in singularity, while it surpasses them all in poetic beauty ; but, unfortunately, its romantic character is its sole claim to insertion. It is impossible to refrain from relating the legend, although its first appearance is in a compilation the date and authorship of which are equally unknown. It runs thus :

His father Gilbert was a citizen of London, who, in the flower of his youth, took upon him the Lord's cross, and set forth for Jerusalem accompanied by a faithful servant of the name of Richard. They fell into the hands of the Saracens, and were set to work as slaves in chains for an "Amirald,"<sup>1</sup> that is, an Emir or prince. Some year and a half had gone by, and Gilbert had made no little progress in the favour of his master, being constantly called to stand before his table, to be questioned on all that could gratify an Oriental curiosity respecting the countries and inhabitants of the West. His daughter was often a listener at these conversations, and her admiration for Gilbert was at length betrayed when she heard that he would willingly die for his faith. She offered to become a Christian, if he would make her his wife. Gilbert was a cautious soul ; and, fearing some womanish craft, put her off with fair words. An opportunity of escape from his bondage at length

<sup>1</sup> From this we have our English word "Admiral."



came, of which he and his companions availed themselves. The poor maiden who was left behind, strong in her love, and forgetful of her people and her father's house, one night set forth alone in search of the Englishman who had fled. Her knowledge of any language but her own was confined to the two names "London" and "Becket;" and these, as she wandered on, she incessantly repeated. At length, associating herself with returning pilgrims, she reached the city, the name of which she had learned from Gilbert as that of his home. Following still the method that had brought her thus far, she was pursued by a crowd of idle children; when Richard, the serving-man, passing through the street, caught the sound of his master's name, and happily recognised her. Gilbert hardly seems to have been delighted at the news, though surely the poor thing's "womanish craft" was simple enough now; but his prudence being still predominant, he ordered Richard to place her under the charge of a matronly neighbour, while he betook himself to St. Paul's, to ask his Bishop's counsel. By the advice of the prelate, who happened to be in conference with his brother Bishops, after the maiden had been duly instructed in the Catholic faith, and solemnly baptized, the story says, "by six Bishops," he took her to wife. The legend does not end here; but adds, that on the day after the wedding Gilbert was seized with a longing desire to revisit the Holy Land; and his bride, having gained from him the cause of his sadness, gave her con-

sent to his departure, if only he would leave Richard to be her interpreter.

During his absence the son was born of whose life this story forms the introduction; whom, on his return at the end of three years and a half, he found all that his heart could wish. Thus far the fable,<sup>2</sup> which is not mentioned by one of the many contemporary biographers of our Saint. Their simple assertion is that he was the son of Gilbert and Mahalt or Matilda Becket,<sup>3</sup> citizens of London; and this is what he says himself in his letters when he had occasion to speak of his parentage.

Previous to his birth, his mother dreamed that the river Thames flowed into her bosom. Startled by so unusual a dream, she went to consult a learned religious, who, having forewarned her that dreams were not to be attended to, nor a woman's visions made much of, told her that in Scripture *water* signified *people*, but that he could not undertake to interpret her vision. She dreamt again that when she was visiting Canterbury Cathedral to pray there, her child prevented her entrance. This time, however, she did not

<sup>2</sup> See Note A at the end of the volume.

<sup>3</sup> The name of Becket appears very seldom. Edward Grim uses it twice, "Pater ejus Gillebertus, cognomento Beket," and "Ubi est Thomas Beketh, proditor regis et regni (*Materials*, ii. pp. 356, 435). The Lambeth MS. says: "Gilbertus quidem cognomento Becchet, patria Rothomagensis" (*Materials*, iv. p. 81). And Garnier calls the Saint's father "Gilebert Beket." Thus we have only one contemporary instance of the name being applied to the Saint himself. Usually he was called "Thomas of London." The form "à Becket" is a colloquialism of comparatively recent date.

return to consult her adviser, fearing lest he should reproach her with folly.

As the time of his birth drew near, it seemed to his mother as if twelve stars of unusual brilliancy had fallen into her lap. It is also said that she dreamt that she was bearing Canterbury Cathedral; and that, when the Saint was born, the nurse, as she held him, exclaimed, "I have an archbishop in my arms."

He was born on Tuesday, December 21st, in the year 1118; and after Vespers, on the same day, he was baptized by the name of St. Thomas the Apostle, whose festival it was. On the very day of his birth a fire broke out in his father's house, which did great damage to the city. A writer of those times says, that the only drawbacks to a residence in London were the prevalence of drunkenness and the frequency of fires.

He was still the subject of his mother's sleeping as well as waking thoughts. After his birth she dreamt that, on upbraiding the nurse for leaving her child uncovered in the cradle, she was told that a beautiful red silk quilt was over him; and that when she examined the beauty of its needlework, she found, on trying with the nurse to unfold it, that the room in which they were, the street, and eventually "the great space of the open plain of Smithfield,"<sup>4</sup> were too small to permit them to do so: a voice the while telling them that they tried in vain, for that all England could not contain it.

<sup>4</sup> "Smithfield" is "Smoothfield" according to Stowe (*Materials*, iii. p. 6).

It was an admirable thing for St. Thomas, and one that left a deep impression on all his life, that the mother from whom he received his earliest instructions should have been of a devout and gentle nature. He used himself to say, that with the fear of the Lord, he had learnt from her two prominent devotions. The one was a great love of the holy Mother of God, whom he was accustomed to invoke as the guide of his paths and the patroness of his life, and in whom, after Christ, he was thus taught to place all his confidence; the second was a great compassion for the poor. And for these two virtues he was always remarkable.

A pretty little story, showing how our Blessed Lady returned the affection of her young client, is recorded by Herbert of Bosham, one of his most intimate friends, to whom he himself told it. When quite a child, as he was recovering from a violent fever, it seemed to him that a lady, tall of stature, with a calm countenance and beautiful appearance, stood by his bedside, and having consoled him by a promise that he should get well, gave two golden keys into his hands with these words: "Thomas, these are the keys of Paradise, of which thou art to have the charge."

At an early age he was placed under the care of Robert, Prior of Merton, of the Order of Canons Regular, who was ever after his faithful friend and spiritual guide, his confessor while he was chancellor, and finally a witness of his martyrdom. While St. Thomas was under him, an event occurred which proves that not his

mother only, but also his father, had been taught by God the future greatness of their son. One day Gilbert went to see him; and as the boy came into the room, the father made a most humble reverence and obeisance to him. The good Prior, indignant at this, said, "Old man, you are mad; what are you doing? Do you throw yourself at the feet of your son? The honour you do to him, he ought to do to you." Gilbert answered the Prior secretly, "Sir, I know what I am doing; for this boy will be great before the Lord."

Though his father was but a London merchant, and his mother in all likelihood had never been out of England, there is a singularly Eastern tone in these stories characteristic of the times, springing in part, perhaps, from the intercourse with the Holy Land that frequent pilgrimages promoted. In many things Englishmen of those days showed much of an Oriental temperament, which their successors of the present time have not inherited.

The parents of the Saint, at the time of his birth, were in moderate if not affluent circumstances. His father was a Norman, who had been Sheriff of London. His friends, as far as we have any record of them, were all Normans.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Richier de l'Egle (Garnier, fol. \*5, l. 11; Grim, p. 359; Rog. Pont. p. 6) was a Norman baron, whose name appears amongst the barons present at Clarendon (Cotton. MSS. Claud. B. 2, fol. 25; Wilkins, *Leg. Anglo-Sax.* Lond. 1721, p. 322). Baillehache (Garnier, fol. \*6, l. 13; Rog. Pont. p. 10) was a Norman soldier, and Baldwin the Archdeacon and Master Eustace (Fitz-St. p. 15) were French ecclesiastics. Thierry (*Hist. de la Conquête*,

Frequent fires and other misfortunes, we are told, reduced Gilbert's family from the wealthy position it had formerly held; but the change of his circumstances does not seem to have alienated his old friends from him. A rich and well-born soldier of the name of Richier de l'Egle is particularly mentioned as having frequented his house, with no little influence on the mind of the youthful St. Thomas. He was especially fond of hunting and hawking, and from him St. Thomas acquired a taste which he never entirely lost.<sup>6</sup>

In company with Richier, an adventure befell him in which the hand of God may well be held to have interfered to save so precious a life. They were riding together, following their hawks, when they came to a rapid mill-stream, which was crossed by no better bridge than a foot-plank. De l'Egle, in the eagerness of sport, urged his horse over it, closely followed by St. Thomas, who had his cloak wrapt tightly round him, with his hood over his head. As he reached the middle of the bridge, his horse's foot slipped, and horse and boy together fell into the stream. He was drawn quickly down by the current, and was in

ii. liv. 9) imagined our Saint to have been of Saxon descent, and upon this error he built a theory. Lord Campbell has followed him.

<sup>6</sup> It is amusing to see, among the miracles recorded after the death of St. Thomas, that several relate to hawks, one of them to a splendid falcon called Wiscard, belonging to the King. The lord of Parthenay in Poitou on the loss of his hawk thus addressed the Saint: "Give me back my hawk, O martyr Thomas, for we know that once you were occupied with such pleasures, and felt pain at losses like mine." It is needless to say that the hawk was recovered (Will. Cant. pp. 528, 502).

imminent danger of being crushed by the mill-wheel. The man in charge of the mill, knowing nothing of what was going on, suddenly turned off the water. The shouts of De l'Egle, which the noise of the wheel had hitherto prevented being heard, now drew the attention of the miller, who rescued St. Thomas from his dangerous position.

There is another account of this occurrence, which says that he leaped into the water after his hawk, forgetful in his eagerness of his own danger. Either form of the story is in close accordance with the naturally ardent and impetuous character of the Saint. There is a local tradition, which says that the scene of this providential rescue is a spot now called Wade's Mill, between Ware and St. Edmund's College. His pious mother was much struck by this deliverance; and she added it to the other wonders on which she pondered, which led her to the conclusion that God had great designs in store for her son. One of her religious practices is very beautiful. She was accustomed at certain seasons to weigh her child, placing in the opposite scale bread, meat, clothes, and money, and other things which were necessary for the poor, and then to distribute all to those who were in want. In this way she always strove to commend him to the mercy of God and the protection of the Blessed Mary ever a Virgin.

It was a sad day for the Saint when he lost this watchful and loving mother. Matilda died when he was twenty-one years old; and Gilbert not long surviving her, he was left to his own re-

sources, — his father's means having become too restricted to leave him much of an inheritance. He had previously studied in the London schools as well as at Merton Abbey. Three great schools there were attached to the principal churches, and on feast days the scholars would hold their disputations in the churches where the feast was celebrated. On such occasions the boys of the several schools would meet and there would be a lively competition in verse, or in their knowledge of their grammar. Their sports were not less vigorous than their literary contests. Shrove Tuesday morning had its barbarous pastime. The boys would bring their fighting cocks with them, and the school would be turned into a cockpit under the master's eye. The afternoon of Shrove Tuesday was devoted to a general game at ball outside the city, while the Sundays in Lent were given up to tilting at the quentin, which game after Easter was played in boats on the river. Fitzstephen, who tells us all this, describes the summer and winter sports; in the latter the skating was on thigh bones fastened to the feet, an iron-pointed staff being held in the hand. Hawking and hunting there was in plenty for those that could afford it, the citizens having rights of hunting in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, the Chiltern Hills, and in Kent down to the River Cray.

In this boyhood spent in London, perhaps the sports had more than their share of the school-boy's time, for when he first went to the Court of the Archbishop, Thomas of London was con-



sidered to be less learned than his two competitors, Roger of Neustria, and John of Canterbury. They were, however, men of unusual ability and acquirements; and we are told that Thomas far excelled them in prudence and manner of life, and that he was not long surpassed by them in learning.

Our Saint had been sent for a time to the University at Paris; not, however, we may be very sure for the motive which has been recently assigned; for it could hardly be necessary for the son of the Norman Gilbert Becket, or for the companion of the "noble and very rich" Richier de l'Egle, to go abroad that he might lose his Saxon accent. He spent his twenty-second year,—that is, 1140,—without an occupation, in his father's house. This was after his return from Paris; for it was to his mother he principally owed his liberal education: and the account of the state of his father's means, after Matilda's death, does not seem such as to lead us to think that he could then afford his son the advantage of a foreign residence. He then went to live with Osbern Witdeniers,<sup>7</sup> a relation of his, and a very wealthy man, who probably held high office in the city, as St. Thomas is said to have been "clerk to the sheriffs." With him he lived

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Giles's edition of Grim (*Vita*, i. p. 8) says, "*Octonumini cognomine.*" Garnier, as printed by Bekker from the MS. in the Brit. Mus. (fol. \*5 b, l. 22) gives "*dit Deniers,*" but the MS. of the Bibliothèque Royale "*Witdeniers.*" The last is proved to be the correct reading by the "*Octo*" of Grim; while the Latin should be read, "*Octonummi,*" as the French shows. The name "*Eightpence*" has not reached our times.

for three years, keeping the merchant's accounts, and acquiring business-like habits which were eventually to benefit both State and Church.

It was not, however, a position much to his taste; but still it needed long deliberation, and much urging on the part of his friends, to induce him to apply for employment to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

We get a curious glimpse into St. Thomas's life, if not about this time, yet at least before he rose to wealth and dignity; and it comes to us in an equally curious manner. Amongst the miracles which took place by the Saint's intercession soon after his martyrdom, is the following, with the simply told narrative of which this necessarily desultory chapter may close. A poor girl of about fifteen had suffered agonies from a most fearful cancer. From harvest-time to the month of March it had grown worse and worse, and at length her illness seemed to have had a fatal termination. She lay in her bed without food, her limbs drawn up, her eyes opened and glazed, and altogether giving no sign of life. At length, towards nightfall, when she had been thus from Tuesday till Friday, a neighbouring woman who was very fond of her came in, and thinking her certainly dead, said, "How came you to let the poor child die in her bed? Why did you not place her on sackcloth, after the Catholic custom?" On this, the body, which had stiffened, was laid out in the courtyard of the house, covered with a sheet and surrounded with lights as usual. Her father, Jordan of

Plumstead, in the diocese of Norwich, worn out with his grief and his day's work, had dropped asleep; but thus awakened, he cried out, "Is Cecilia dead?" The woman replied, "She most certainly is dead." On which the father began: "O blessed Thomas, martyr of God, pay me now for the service I once so heartily did you; pay me now for my service; now I am in want of it. I served you heartily before you were raised to worldly honours; pay me now for my service. Remember, blessed martyr, when you were ill in Kent, in the house of Thurstan the cleric at Croydon, how heartily I served you: wine and beer and strong drinks you could not touch, and I ransacked the neighbourhood for some whey for you to drink. Pay me for my service. Then you had only one horse, and I took care of it. Pay me for my service. Remember, martyr, all the trouble I took for you: you are not so poor, that I should have served you for nothing." And so he spent half the night, saying, till he was quite hoarse, "Pay me for my service." The holy martyr heard him; and Cecilia moved her hand from under the sheet, and tried to speak. The next day she took some nourishment; on the third the cancer dried up; and in three weeks, without medicine of any kind, she was quite well. William,<sup>8</sup> the Bishop of Norwich, examined the priest of the place and many witnesses; and, on her going on a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to the shrine of the Saint at Canterbury, sent with her testimonial letters attesting the miracle.

<sup>8</sup> William Turbo, a Norman, consecrated Bishop of Norwich in 1146, died Jan. 20, 1174 (Gervase, Ed. Stubbs, p. 246).

## CHAPTER II.

### THE COURT OF CANTERBURY.

1143—1154.

St. Thomas introduced to Theobald—the Archbishop's Court—personal description of St. Thomas—ill-will of Roger de Pont l'Evêque—the legatine office—St. Thomas visits Rome—the primacy of Canterbury over York—St. Bernard's help—the Council of Rheims—St. Thomas revisits Rome—the succession to the Crown—the Saint's ecclesiastical preferment—his study of canon law at Bologna and Auxerre—Roger Archbishop of York and St. Thomas Archdeacon of Canterbury—death of King Stephen—Pope Adrian IV.

ST. THOMAS was introduced into the Archbishop's service under very favourable auspices. Not only had Theobald a personal acquaintance with the Saint's father, who was like himself a native of the village of Thierceville in Normandy, but Gilbert was familiar with priests and other officials of the Archbishop's Court and household, whom he had been in the habit of entertaining. Two brothers, from Boulogne, Baldwin the Archdeacon and Master Eustace, interested themselves with the Primate in his favour. But St. Thomas was principally induced to place himself under Theobald's protection by the representations of one of the Archbishop's marshals called Baillehache, who had long been intimate with Gilbert.

The Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury was the centre of almost all the learning and ability

of the kingdom. Amongst those who composed it when St. Thomas joined their number was Roger the future Archbishop of York, John of Canterbury, afterwards Bishop of Poitiers and Archbishop of Lyons, as well as the men destined ultimately to hold most of the episcopal sees of the kingdom. As we have said, the early education of our Saint seems to have been of a desultory character; and he keenly felt his inferiority in learning to those by whom he was now surrounded. His natural genius being of a very high order, and his perseverance indomitable, it was not long before he rendered himself as fit as any of his competitors for whatever office or undertaking might be intrusted to him. He was remarkable for the acuteness of his bodily senses. It was matter of frequent comment through his life, that scarcely anything could be said in his presence, however far off, or in however low a tone, but he could hear it if he chose to listen. So, too, there was nothing which could affect the sense of smell, which would not immediately either offend or gratify him, from however great a distance. His eye was remarkably large and clear, and his glance so quick and comprehensive that nothing escaped him. He was unusually tall, with a prominent and slightly aquiline nose. His countenance was beautiful, and his expression habitually calm. The tradition of all later times has always drawn him without a beard, but this detail of his appearance is not mentioned by his biographers. The vivacity of his conversation and his fluency, combined with the refinement of his

language, spoke at once of the high qualities of his natural gifts, and of the tone of his education.

After a while, when Theobald came to know him thoroughly, and to value him as he deserved, he made him a member of his council, and trusted him highly; but at first his position in the Archbishop's favour was endangered by the jealousy of one whose hostility continued through life, even when they both of them filled archiepiscopal sees. Roger de Pont l'Evêque showed his jealousy of the Saint on their first being thrown together by derisively calling him *Clerk Baillehache*, from the name of the man at whose instance he had joined the Archbishop's household. The allusion to an axe in the Norman name leads one of his biographers to say, that "he would one day prove to be an axe to hew Roger and his accomplices from the company of the just." Twice he was the cause of the Saint's banishment from the Archbishop's Court, ere he was yet firm in the favour of that prelate. On each occasion he was restored to his position by the influence of Walter, the Archbishop's brother, then Archdeacon of Canterbury, who was his steady friend through life.

In a short time his noble qualities so endeared him to the Archbishop, that he employed him in the conduct of the most delicate and important matters. King Stephen was seated on the throne of England; and his brother, the well-known Henry of Blois, was Bishop of Winchester. Pope Innocent, who had celebrated in 1139 the General Council of a thousand Bishops, called

the Second of Lateran, which was attended by Theobald and four other English bishops, had made Henry of Blois his legate in England. In virtue of this authority, Henry held two synods in the year 1142, a little before the time when St. Thomas joined the Archbishop. However, the possession of the legatine power by a suffragan was not found to work well, and the two prelates interested went to Rome to submit the question to the Holy See. This was in 1143, the year in which Pope Innocent died. The political state of Rome was most unsettled; and as the Sacred College felt the danger of an interregnum, the Chair of Peter was vacant only a day. However, Pope Celestine II. reigned but six months; and, after another vacancy of one day, Lucius succeeded.

When St. Thomas visited Rome in company with Archbishop Theobald, the Holy Father was probably at the Vatican, under shelter of the Castle of St. Angelo, which was in the hands of those who were faithful to him. Trastevere then, as ever, prided itself on its fidelity; while the rest of the city was in a very turbulent state. Such a position of affairs can hardly have been favourable to the discussion of the business which led them to Rome. Theobald was doubtless successful, for we have no further mention of Henry as legate; and the Archbishop presided in that capacity over the next council which was held in England. As, however, this synod was not before the year 1151, we do not know whether his success was immediate.

It would be very interesting to know where St. Thomas lodged in the Eternal City; but we have nothing to guide us to the spot. The hospital, the munificent foundation of John and Alice Shepherd, was not founded for the next two hundred years; it was then dedicated, as its successor the English College now is, to the Blessed Trinity, in honour of our Saint. The Anglo-Saxon establishment, of which the memory is preserved in the name of Santo Spirito in Sassia, and with which are connected the names of Ina, Ethelwolf, Alfred, and Canute, still existed,<sup>1</sup> but in great poverty. The other English foundations were all of a later date than St. Thomas's visit.

There was another matter of considerable importance, the management of which may very probably have been intrusted by Theobald to St. Thomas. It was one which rose into still greater consequence when the Saint had succeeded his master and patron in the see of Canterbury,—the precedence of that church over the archbishopric of York, and the claim of the northern metropolitan to have his cross borne before him in the province of Canterbury. In St. Gregory's letter, dated June 22, 601, which is extant in Venerable Bede,<sup>2</sup> the Pope decreed that St. Augustine was to be Superior of the whole island, but that after his death, the two metropolitans of London (as he intended) and York were to be independent of one another, taking

<sup>1</sup> See Note B.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccl. Gentis Anglor.* i. c. 29.



precedence by priority of consecration. On this letter York rested all its claim to a complete exemption from the authority of Canterbury. But it is clear that the rule given in that letter was reversed by St. Gregory himself and by many subsequent Popes. This may have arisen from the fact that four Archbishops of Canterbury passed away before there was an Archbishop of York. St. Paulinus received the pallium in 633, shortly after he had consecrated St. Honorius Archbishop of Canterbury, and Pope Honorius I. sent at the same time instructions that when an archbishop of Canterbury or York should die, the survivor should consecrate the new Archbishop. But Pope after Pope had enacted that York should be subject to Canterbury. In the time of Lanfranc, Pope Alexander II. referred the matter to a Synod of the whole of England to be discussed and determined. In that Synod the history of the Church of York by Bede was read, and it showed that from the days of St. Augustine to those of Bede, Canterbury was supreme over York and the whole island, that the Archbishop of Canterbury had ordained and held councils in York, had summoned the Archbishop of York to his Synods, and had sat in judgment upon him. Further, the decrees of Popes St. Gregory the Great, Boniface, Honorius, Vitalian, Sergius, Gregory II., Leo, and "of the last Leo," that is, St. Leo IX., were read, and by them the claim of Canterbury was established. The Archbishop of York, having nothing to allege but the single letter of St. Gregory, submitted

and excused himself on the plea that he was not aware that the case in favour of Canterbury was so strong. This was in the year 1072.<sup>3</sup> Since that time other Popes confirmed the Primacy to other Archbishops of Canterbury, using the formula, "as it is known that your predecessors have had by authority of the Apostolic See from the times of Blessed Augustine." Thus Paschal II. to St. Anselm; thus Eugenius III. to Theobald, as the result, no doubt, of the embassy to Rome of St. Thomas; and thus, later on, Alexander III. to St. Thomas himself, when Archbishop,<sup>4</sup> as the Register preserved in the Archives of Canterbury Cathedral still shows.

In these negotiations Theobald received powerful assistance from St. Bernard. When, in the reign of Innocent, he had wished to visit the Holy See, and had been prevented, St. Bernard wrote a letter<sup>5</sup> to the Pope, in which he spoke very highly in his praise. The death of Lucius in 1145 was the occasion of the election of Bernard, a Cistercian abbot, who became famous as Pope Eugenius III., not less by his own deeds than through the writings of his saintly namesake. In the very first letter which the holy Abbot of Clairvaux addressed to the new Pope, he took the part of the Archbishop of Canterbury, against the prelates of York and Winchester, in what he there styles "the ancient quarrel relating to the legatine office." It is pleasant to think that it

<sup>3</sup> Wilkins, *Concilia*, i. p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> Epp. ccxi. cxxxviii. Ed. Horst. Lugd. 1687.

is extremely probable that St. Thomas may, in his journeys to and from Rome, have called at Clairvaux to see his powerful advocate St. Bernard, and be himself the bearer of his letters to the Holy See; and that thus a personal affection may have sprung up between those two Saints.

The turbulence of Rome still continuing, Pope Eugenius visited France; and in 1148 he left Paris, where King Louis had given him a royal reception, for Rheims, to which city the Bishops of the Universal Church had been summoned by mid-Lent to celebrate a council. Owing to the influence of Henry of Winton, who was perhaps angry at the loss of his legateship, and who wished to subject the Archbishop to the anger of either the King or the Pope, King Stephen refused Theobald permission to attend the council. The Archbishop, however, managed to escape the guards who had been set to prevent his leaving England; and alone of all the bishops of that country, except three, whom the King sent to excuse the rest, he attended the synod. He was accompanied by St. Thomas, who himself has recorded that Theobald was received with much honour by the Pope, and thanked by him in full synod, "because he had come to the council rather swimming than sailing."

The King forced Theobald to leave England again after his return from the council; and he stayed at St. Omer, where he consecrated Gilbert Foliot Bishop of Hereford, with the assistance of the Bishops of Amiens and Cambridge. From this place, by the authority of Pope

Eugenius, England was placed under an interdict, until, by the mediation of some of the bishops and nobles, the King made his peace with the Archbishop.

St. Thomas had at this time another journey to Rome, on a matter of the very greatest public importance. It was Stephen's wish that his son Eustace should be crowned king during his own lifetime, in order to secure the succession. This was contrary to the understanding that the crown was to remain with Stephen for his life, and then was to descend to Henry. The proposed coronation of Eustace was expressly forbidden by the Pope; and the chronicler<sup>6</sup> tells us that this prohibition, which secured the crown without dispute to Henry, had been gained by "the subtle prudence and cleverness of one Thomas, a cleric of London, whose father was called Gilbert, and mother Matilda." Gregory, the Cardinal-Deacon of St. Angelo, foreseeing the career of Henry II., had recommended a different course, saying that "it was easier to hold a ram by the horns than a lion by the tail." When it was found that Theobald was inflexible in his obedience to the Pope's command, Stephen sent Roger de Pont l'Evêque to Rome; but his embassy was unsuccessful. The negotiation respecting the coronation of Eustace took place in 1152. In the following year Eustace died, and the succession was secured to Henry by the Convention of Winchester in November, 1153.

Meanwhile St. Thomas was advancing in eccle-

<sup>6</sup> Gervase, p. 150.

siastical preferment. He was presented by John, the Bishop of Worcester, to the church of St. Mary Littory;<sup>7</sup> a term which one author has understood to mean Shoreham, and another St. Mary-le-Strand. As a reward for his service, the Archbishop gave him the church of Otford. He afterwards had a prebendal stall in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and another at Lincoln. His biographer also says that the Archbishop gave him leave to go beyond the sea, and that he studied the canon law for a year at Bologna, where the celebrated Gratian was his instructor, and afterwards at Auxerre. Here it was that he imbibed that exact knowledge of the Church's laws and rights, which enabled him in after years to fight her battles as a less skilful lawyer could hardly have done.

When Walter, the Archbishop's brother, was made Bishop of Rochester, in 1147, Roger de Pont l'Evêque became Archdeacon of Canterbury, and on the 10th of October, 1154, Theobald consecrated him Archbishop of York; and so he became successor to St. William, as that Saint had foretold. The archdeaconry of Canterbury thus rendered vacant, Archbishop Theobald conferred upon St. Thomas, the highest dignity in the Church in England after the bishoprics and abbacies, and worth one hundred pounds in silver. He succeeded Roger in another piece of preferment of value and ecclesiastical rank, being made

<sup>7</sup> Matthew of Westminster (*Annal. ad ann. 1155*) says that before he went to Archbishop Theobald, he had received from the Abbot of St. Alban's the benefice of Bratfield.

the Provost of Beverley. At this time the Saint was ordained deacon.

The close of the year 1154 is remarkable in English annals for the death of King Stephen, and for the election of the only Englishman who has ever sat in the Chair of St. Peter, Nicholas Breakspeare, a native of St. Alban's, who took the title of Pope Adrian IV.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

1155—1161.

Coronation of Henry II.—St. Thomas made Chancellor—his office—he expels the Flemings—restores the Tower—his magnificence—hospitality—recreations—intimacy with the King—his austerities—purity—devotions—his embassy to France—war of Toulouse—and in the Marches—personal deeds of valour—friendship of King Louis—conversation with the Prior of Leicester.

ON the 19th December, 1154, Henry II., in his twenty-first year, was crowned King of England at Westminster by Archbishop Theobald, the Legate of the Holy See. He could not fail to be aware of the part which had been taken by St. Thomas to secure his succession. Through his influence the Holy See had forbidden the Archbishop of Canterbury to crown Eustace; and he doubtless took a leading part in the negotiation by which the Primate and the Bishop of Winchester had procured from Stephen an acknowledgment of the right of Henry to succeed to the Crown. We are therefore not astonished to learn that, when St. Thomas was put forward by Archbishop Theobald as worthy of high place about the young King's person, he should at once have been promoted to the chancellorship of England. This was in 1155, when he was thirty-eight years

old, and consequently considerably the King's senior.

The dignity of the office which he now filled was such, that the famous Peter of Rémy, calls him "second to the King in four kingdoms." The Chapel Royal was in his care; he had the custody of the Great Seal, and with its reverse we are told he was at liberty to seal his own documents; his place in the councils of the Sovereign was most important; and by an abuse which then prevailed, he administered the revenues of all vacant bishoprics and abbaties.

The talents of St. Thomas had now full scope to manifest themselves. Within three months of the King's coronation, an evil which had its rise in the disturbed reign of Stephen was vigorously remedied. Many foreign adventurers, principally Flemings, of whom the most notorious was William de Ipres, created by that King Earl of Kent, were driven out of England; and the destruction of many castles which had served to harbour wrong-doers in troubled times restored a sense of security to the country. The Chancellor showed similar energy in the restoration of the Tower of London, which had become dilapidated. It is recorded as a marvel, that so many hands were employed, that the work was completed between Easter and Whitsuntide.

There can be no doubt that St. Thomas had a singular taste for magnificence; and now, not merely were the means for its gratification abundantly supplied, but it became almost a duty in consideration of the position which he filled.



Probably in all history there is no parallel to the place he held as the favourite of his Sovereign. Preferment of all kinds was heaped upon him; indeed there was nothing he might not have had if he had chosen to ask for it. To the ecclesiastical offices, of which he already held so many, there was added the deanery of Hastings; and among those of a more secular character, he received the wardenship of the Tower of London, with the military service attached to it; the Castlery of Eye, with its honour of seven-score soldiers; and the Castle of Berkhamstead. Thus the Chancellor had feudal rights over considerable territories and bodies of men; and it would seem that many nobles and knights voluntarily submitted themselves to him as "his men," in the language of the times, and paid him homage, saving their fealty to the King. His retinue was further swelled by the presence in his household of the sons of many of the nobility, who were sent to learn from him and from those whom he attracted about him how to fit themselves for the Court and the battlefield. A little later King Henry intrusted to him the education of his eldest son, perhaps as the greatest possible mark of confidence.

Everything about him was of the most costly description; his purveyors were reckless of expense in providing for his table, and the very bit in his horse's mouth was wrought in silver. His hospitality was unbounded. His own table was never without guests of the highest rank; while in the lower part of the hall room was found, not

only for his own large retinue, but also for very many who stood in need of his hospitality when frequenting the King's Court. It is a curious trait of the manners of those times, that every day his dining-hall was strewed with fresh straw or hay in the winter, and in the summer time with rushes or green boughs; for the floor had to serve as a seat for those guests who thronged the hall in greater numbers than the benches round the walls could accommodate. When the guests had dined, a plentiful meal was set before vast numbers of the poor who took their places, towards whom his open-handed generosity was so remarkable, that worldly people counted it almost superstition. The wretched and the oppressed were admitted to him without delay; and in his judicial capacity he was renowned for the justice done and the mercy shown to poor suitors.

The King's household could scarcely bear comparison with that of his clerical Chancellor; his very magnificence, however, was made to redound to the glory of his royal master. On one occasion ambassadors came into England from the King of Norway. As soon as the Chancellor heard of their arrival, he sent officials to bring them to the Court with all honour, and at his own expense.

The importance of Henry's continental dominions rendered it necessary that the Court should be held on either side of the Channel. The Chancellor fitted up three ships in a style worthy of the King's acceptance, and offered them to him

as a present. When he himself would cross, six or more ships sailed in company; and any one who was waiting for a passage was sure to be able to obtain it in the Chancellor's train.

His recreation, after the many and varied duties of his office, was of that description in which the Norman nobles were accustomed to indulge, and for which he had long ago acquired a taste. His amusements were thus in his horses, hounds, and hawks; forgetful of his place in the Church's hierarchy, and giving him much cause of self-reproach in his after-life. He was also fond of the game of draughts.

There is something very characteristic in the light-hearted sportiveness of the familiarity that existed between him and his youthful King. They were more like two schoolfellows than a great Sovereign and his first Minister. Henry would sometimes enter the Chancellor's dining-hall on horseback, perhaps with an arrow in his hand, as he was going to or returning from the chase; and we can imagine the stir among the motley crowd of retainers as the King would at one time drink to his Chancellor's health, and then ride away again; or at another time, leaping over the table on the dais, seat himself by his side, and thus become an unexpected guest.

A story is told which puts before us the frolicsome terms on which they lived. One cold winter's day they were riding together in the streets of London, the nobles and their other attendants having dropped behind to a considerable distance, to leave them more free, when the

King spied a poor old man shivering, half-clad, in the cold. "Poor old fellow," said the King, "do you see how cold he looks? would it not be a famous alms to give him a thick warm cloak?" "A very proper thought, and a royal one too," replied the unsuspecting Chancellor. On coming up to the old man they stopped, and Henry quietly asked him whether he would not like to have a good cloak. The poor man did not know them, and did not believe that they could be in earnest. "You shall give this great alms," said the King, as he turned to the Chancellor; and so saying, laid hold of his beautiful new cloak of scarlet and gray, and tried to take it off his shoulders, so that quite a scuffle ensued. The attendants hastened up, lost in astonishment, and found the King and his Chancellor so struggling as to be hardly able to keep their saddles. It is needless to say who came off victorious; and the poor old man went on his way loudly praising God for his good fortune, and clad in the Chancellor's grand cloak by the King's own hand. The courtiers heard the story, and laughed long and loud, as in duty bound. Not that they forgot to offer the Chancellor their own cloaks in lieu of the scarlet and gray which had been given away. Enough, however, of these lighter matters; it is full time we turned to more serious thoughts connected with the time of the chancellorship of our Saint.

We have mentioned the luxury and prodigality of his table. It is true that he was a man of refined tastes, and perhaps fastidious delicacy;

the habits of his whole life had made him so : it is no less true that in the midst of such profuseness he was singularly moderate. He had, moreover, practices of austerity which would scarcely have been looked for under his splendid exterior. He often bore the discipline from the hands of Ralph, the Prior of Holy Trinity, when he was in the neighbourhood of London ; and when he was at Canterbury, from the hands of Thomas, a priest of St. Martin's. Robert, the venerable Canon of Merton, under whom he had been brought up, was still his confessor ; and he bore testimony to Fitzstephen, one of the Saint's most careful biographers, that all through this most trying portion of his life, in spite of the license of Norman manners and the snares of the Court, his life remained perfectly pure. An anecdote of one who suspected that it might be otherwise not only confirms this opinion of his virtue, but gives us also a glimpse of further secret austerities.

✓ Once, when he was in attendance on the King at Stafford, the suspicions of his host Vivien the cleric were aroused by the attentions which he fancied were paid to the Chancellor by a lady of the name of Anice de Stafford, who was remarkable for her beauty, and whose reputation had suffered in consequence of her intimacy with the King. Wishing to ascertain the truth, he secretly, in the dead of the night, entered his guest's chamber with a lantern. The bed he found was undisturbed ; but on looking round the room with his light, he saw the Saint asleep on the hard

floor at the foot of the bed, partially undressed. His sleep was the heaviness of exhaustion, and his inquisitive host was enabled to withdraw unobserved.

The good Canons Regular of Merton Abbey were taken into the King's favour now that a child of their house had become a royal favourite. Fitzstephen tells us that the King completed the Abbey Church and endowed it, and that he would sometimes spend the three last days of Holy Week with the community. After Tenebræ at midnight on Good Friday till three in the afternoon, he would visit the neighbouring village churches on foot, disguised in a cloak, with but one companion to show him the way. We should have thought the story more probable if it had been told of the Chancellor rather than of the King; but at least it does not seem rash to conjecture that the Chancellor accompanied his master.

One of the most important events of his chancellorship was his famous mission to ask the King of France to espouse his daughter Marguerite to Prince Henry, the heir-apparent of England since his brother William's death. The bridegroom-elect was a child of five years of age, and the little princess was but three; and it was thirteen years before the marriage was completed. This embassy was conducted with a magnificence of which we have but few parallels even in the records of such ceremonial occasions. His immediate retinue consisted of two hundred members of his own household, clerics, seneschals.

and servitors, knights and esquires, as well as the sons of noblemen who were in his suite with their respective attendants, all gaily equipped. Huntsmen led hounds in leashes, and falconers carried hawks upon their fists. Eight wagons conveyed all the requisites for the journey, drawn by five high-bred horses; at the head of each horse was a groom on foot, "dressed in a new tunic." A spare horse followed each wagon. Two were laden with beer in casks bound with iron, to be given to the French, "who admire that kind of drink," as Fitzstephen tells us, adding that "it is wholesome, clear, of the colour of wine, and of a better taste." The Chancellor's chapel-furniture had its own wagon, his chamber had one, his pantry another, his kitchen another; others carried provisions, and others again the baggage of the party; amongst them, four-and-twenty suits of clothing for presents, as well as furs and carpets. Then there were twelve sumpter-horses; eight chests containing the Chancellor's gold and silver plate; and besides a very considerable store of coin, "some books" found room. The sumpter-horse which led the way was laden with the sacred vessels of the chapel, and the altar ornaments and books. Beneath every wagon was an English mastiff, and a monkey rode on each sumpter-horse's load.

The order of march was as follows: some two hundred and fifty young Englishmen led the way in knots of six or ten or more together, singing their national songs as they entered the French

villages. After an interval came the huntsmen with their dogs; then the wagons, iron-bound and covered with hides, rattled over the stones of the streets; at a little distance followed the sumpter-horses with their quaint riders. After another interval the esquires followed, carrying the shields of the knights and leading their chargers; then other esquires; after them the falconers, carrying their birds; afterwards senechals, masters and servants of the Chancellor's household; then the knights and clerics, all riding two and two; lastly came the Chancellor himself, surrounded by his intimate friends. "What must the King of England be," said the French as he went by, "if his Chancellor travels in such state?"<sup>1</sup>

The King of France, wishing to take upon himself the entertainment of his guest, issued orders at Paris that nothing was to be sold to any of the ambassador's followers. When the rumour of this came to his ears, he sent on people secretly to the villages round Paris, to Lagny, Corbeil, Pontoise and St. Denys, to purchase for him all that he could require. On his arrival, when he entered the Temple, where he was to lodge, his purveyors met him with the information that they had laid in stores sufficient to keep a thou-

<sup>1</sup> As St. Thomas passed through the territory of Limoges, he was entertained by Hugh of Meimac. Four years after the martyrdom Hugh was lying very ill and sent a candle of the length of his body to the Saint's shrine. The following night he was informed in his sleep that the martyr Thomas was his former guest the Chancellor, "to whom he had given whey in a silver goblet." He was cured (Will. Cant. p. 446).



sand men for three days. Such open-handed expenditure had never been seen in Paris before. On one occasion a dish of eels for his table cost a hundred shillings; and the "English Chancellor's dish" passed into a proverb.

The scholars and masters of the schools of Paris waited upon him, doubtless not forgetful that he had himself studied among them; and even the citizens who had debtors among the English students threw themselves upon his generosity. His prodigality in making presents was unbounded; he gave away nearly everything; all his gold and silver plate, and all the changes of clothing he had brought with him for that purpose: "to one he gave a gray cloak, to another one of furs; to this one a palfrey, to that one a charger;" no one left him empty-handed. What wonder that his embassy should have been perfectly successful?

It was not only in peaceful negotiations that the splendid liberality and the skilful diplomacy of our Chancellor were apparent, for in truth they were not less conspicuous in the time of war. In the siege of Toulouse, where there were assembled forces from Normandy, Aquitaine, Anjou, Brittany, and Scotland, as well as from England itself, the Chancellor's own troops were ever prominent. He was followed by seven hundred knights of his own household. Had his advice been adopted, the war would have been brought to a very speedy conclusion. The King of France had thrown himself into Toulouse with a very insufficient garrison. The Chancellor

proposed an immediate assault; but Henry, though he did not mind waging war against the King of France, who was his feudal lord in virtue of his continental dominions, yet scrupled to attack his person. In the Chancellor's opinion, Louis had laid aside all claims to the character of feudal superior when he went to war with the King of England. However, the French army was not long in reaching the scene, when the Kings of England and Scotland withdrew their forces from before Toulouse,<sup>2</sup> after they had taken Cahors and several castles. In order to retain these, the Chancellor, together with Henry of Essex,<sup>3</sup> the King's constable, volunteered to remain. Clad in breastplate and helmet, he headed his troops, and took three highly fortified castles which were reputed impregnable. He also crossed the Garonne; and when the whole province was confirmed in its obedience to the King, he returned to England in high favour and honour.

On a later occasion, when the seat of the war was in the Marches, between Gisors, Trie, and Courcelles, on the boundaries of the English and French territories, besides the seven hundred knights of his own household, the Chancellor brought into the field twelve hundred knights

<sup>2</sup> Gervase says that Toulouse was besieged from the feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24) to that of All Saints (November 1) 1159.

<sup>3</sup> This statement by Fitzstephen is hardly in keeping with that of Gervase, who says that Henry of Essex incurred perpetual disgrace for having let the King's standard fall in a battle in Wales in 1157.

and four thousand men, maintaining them at his own expense for forty days. Every knight received from him three shillings a day, to furnish himself with horses and esquires. The Chancellor's knights were the foremost in every enterprise in the whole English army. They used to sound the sally and the retreat on slender trumpets which were peculiar to their troop, and the sound of which soon became familiar to both armies. Their prominence was due to the Chancellor's personal courage and prowess. On his return from his embassy to France, he had taken prisoner Guy de Laval, a noted freebooter, and imprisoned him at Neuf-marché. We have seen him in his armour leading the troops in the neighbourhood of Toulouse; and now we hear of him engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter with a valiant French knight, Engelramne de Trie, whom he unhorsed, making a prize of his charger.

In spite of his valour when engaged in war against him, King Louis of France had almost as great a friendship for him as his own Sovereign. Once, when he was confined by a serious illness at St. Gervase in Rouen, the two Kings came together to visit him. One day, during his convalescence, he was sitting playing a game of chess, wearing a cloak with sleeves, which had, we suppose, a very secular air. Aschetin, the Prior of Leicester, on his return from Gascony, where the King's Court was, went to see him. It was always characteristic of our Saint, that he suffered his friends to speak to him as freely as they chose; even though it should be to find

fault with him. The Prior of Leicester accordingly began: "What do you mean by wearing a cloak with such sleeves as those? You look more like a falconer than a cleric. Yet cleric you are, in person one, in office many, Archdeacon of Canterbury, Dean of Hastings, Provost of Beverley, Canon of this place and of that, procurator too of the archbishopric, and as the current report goes at Court, Archbishop to be." In the course of the conversation the Chancellor said, "I know three poor priests in England, any one of whom I had rather see promoted to the archbishopric than myself; for I know my lord the King so intimately, that I am sure I should have to choose between his favour and that of Almighty God, if I myself were to be appointed." This interview happened after Theobald's death, a period which we have not yet reached; but it is here introduced as descriptive of the manner of his life during his chancellorship.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHANCELLOR'S POLICY. .

1155—1161.

Military career of the Chancellor—Gilbert Foliot refuses the administration of London—second subsidies—the Chancellor interferes in behalf of the Archdeacon of London, of John of Salisbury, the Archdeacon of Rouen and the Bishop of Le Mans—difficulty of the position—Battle Abbey—judgments on the Chancellor's conduct.

It would be neither easy nor justifiable to attempt to clear St. Thomas from all blame in the scenes we have just witnessed. The argument which would excuse him for his warlike occupations on the score of the manners of the age, is not, it is true, altogether without weight; let the reader estimate its value for himself. Still, though this may palliate, it cannot justify so signal an infringement of the Church's canons. Beyond question it is not edifying to read of the Archdeacon of Canterbury—the first unmitred dignitary in England, a churchman by all the ties of his plurality of benefices, and a deacon in orders—as “clad in breastplate and helmet,” in successful tilt unhorsing the valiant Sir Engelramne, “with lance in rest and charger at gallop.” However, the most important view of the matter, that which his own conscience took, is sufficiently satisfactory. In after-days, when everything was

weighed by him in the balance of the sanctuary, his lamentation was, *De pastore avium factus sum Pastor ovium*. The worldliness of his former life was his principal regret, without any special remorse in reference to deeds of arms, which in our times would be held to induce irregularity, and to render an application to the Pope necessary for absolution.

The vigour and energy of character, which led him to promote the war by appearing in person at the head of his troops, induced him to co-operate with the King in more than one scheme for procuring funds to carry it on, which are quite indefensible in their nature. Towards the close of St. Thomas's chancellorship, the bishopric of London fell vacant by the death of Richard de Beaumes, a relative of Gilbert Foliot, the Bishop of Hereford. The see was soon offered by the Chancellor to Gilbert himself, who afterwards occupied it, but who now refused it in consequence of the disgraceful condition annexed to the offer of the translation. The letter is still extant in which Gilbert excuses himself to the King for his refusal. "The Lord Chancellor requests me," he says, "to undertake the charge of the bishopric of London, and with part of the income to maintain myself and my household as its Bishop, and to reserve the rest for my Lord the King, to be spent as the Spirit of God shall prompt him." It is greatly to Gilbert's credit that he should have refused to do what he well calls "a grievous injury to his soul." The revenues of the see, on its falling vacant, were confis-

cated to the King's treasury, by an abuse which had been forsworn in more than one coronation oath; and the charge of them was intrusted to the Chancellor, who administered the widowed see by the clerics of his household. It may be that this offer to the Bishop of Hereford was only "that he should take charge of the bishopric" as administrator during the vacancy of the see, which would of course render the proposal far less reprehensible, as it would be but retaining a part of what the King was accustomed wholly to confiscate; and it is not an improbable supposition that St. Thomas, who, as we know, used his influence with the King to prevent long vacancies, may in this instance have been able to gain nothing more liberal to the Church than the compromise here offered. Still it must be confessed that Gilbert's subsequent translation to this very see, and his evident indignation at the offer, render it probable that the transaction was as wrong as it at first sight appears to have been. As far, however, as the doubt is a fair one, it is but just that St. Thomas's reputation as chancellor and statesman should have its full benefit.

Another evil of the same kind, but more grievous, because its effects were more widely felt, was what Archbishop Theobald called, in a letter he wrote to accompany his will when he felt his end was approaching, "the custom of second subsidies, which our brother the Archdeacon [Walter, at this time Bishop of Rochester<sup>1</sup>] has imposed upon the churches." This

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 9.

“custom” was the imposition of an unjust and illegal tax upon the clergy for the prosecution of the war, a part of the great “scutage” raised by the King for the expenses of the Toulouse campaign.<sup>2</sup> In this there can be little doubt St. Thomas co-operated with Henry, for Theobald tells him that he cannot listen to him when he asks for the exaction of these subsidies without breaking a vow that he made when he thought he was dying. But the Archbishop attributes these subsidies to his own brother, years before, and he is far from saying that the Chancellor was responsible for them. John of Salisbury, than whom probably a better informed authority could not be cited, later on, when of course this proceeding was brought as a precedent or a reproach against St. Thomas, replied to the objection, “But perhaps it will be said that the imposition of the tax, and the whole, in short, of this disturbance, is to be attributed to the Archbishop,” as he was when this was written, “who then had complete influence over the King, and made this suggestion to him. Now I know that this was not the case, for he only allowed the measure to pass, he did not sanction it. Inasmuch, however, as he was the instrument of injustice, it is a suitable punishment to him that he should be persecuted now by the very person whom he then preferred to his Supreme Benefactor.”

There can be no doubt that Archbishop Theobald's object in recommending St. Thomas to the King, was the hope that he might be able to

<sup>2</sup> See Note C.



influence his master in those many matters in which the strong hand of the State had interfered from time to time with the liberty of the Church. Not that there was any specific understanding on the subject, but that St. Thomas's principles were well known to the Archbishop, and had been long tested in his many years of ecclesiastical service. The position he now held was one of great delicacy and difficulty. The King's temperament was fiery in the extreme; and opposition, or even a show of independence, drove him to great lengths. Beyond a doubt St. Thomas always had the liberty of the Church at heart, and through him, while he was Chancellor, she was spared much oppression.

We have some instances to detail in which the Chancellor used his powerful influence with the King in behalf of churchmen who had incurred his displeasure. The first case is that of Nicholas, Archdeacon of London. The cause of the King's irritation with him has not come down to us, but the arbitrariness with which he was treated is very characteristic of King Henry II. His relations were ordered into exile, and his house was seized to be sold for the King's benefit. The good Chancellor did not rest until, on the very day on which it came to his knowledge, he had obtained for the Archdeacon a free pardon and his recall.

John of Salisbury had letters from the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury to appease the anger of the King, and desiring the intervention also of the Chancellor, he wrote to Ernulf, the

Saint's secretary, saying that he knew that in the multitude of his occupations and Court duties the Chancellor would need some one to remind him of his friend's request, and begging Ernulf to do him this service. This Ernulf St. Thomas made his chancellor, when he himself became Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup>

Our Saint's good offices were employed in behalf of other dignitaries and in a more important cause. On the accession of Pope Alexander, and the breaking out of the schism, Hugh, the Archbishop of Rouen, at once espoused the cause of the rightful Pope, and sent his nephew and Archdeacon, Gilo, to his suffragan Bishops to induce them to profess the same obedience. The King was very angry that it had not been left to him to take the initiative in this great question. He did not dare to do anything directly against the Archbishop, who was much respected; but he ordered the house of Gilo to be pulled down. St. Thomas interfered, representing that, though the house belonged to Gilo, it was there that he himself was accustomed to lodge; endeavouring thus to save the Archdeacon's property without irritating Henry by opposition.

The next day the King heard that the Bishop of Le Mans had followed the example of the Archbishop of Rouen, and acknowledged Alexander to be the lawful Pope without so much as consulting him. The royal marshals went straight to the Bishop's hostelry, where they cut the halters and turned loose his horses; and having

<sup>3</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 7.

carried his baggage into the streets, they deprived him of his lodging, and drove him in disgrace from Court. The King then had briefs prepared, giving orders that the Bishop's house at Le Mans should be immediately pulled down. As soon as he had signed them, he held them up in his hand before the large company of nobles and ecclesiastics who were present at his Court, saying, "It will not be long before the good people of Le Mans hear something about their Bishop." This was at Neuf-marché; and as the King of France was there also, the consternation produced by this violent conduct was very widespread. The Chancellor knew that it was quite useless to attempt at once to pacify Henry. The great thing was to gain time; so, on despatching the messengers, he privately instructed them to take four days for the journey, which was usually made in two. The next day the Chancellor sent some of the bishops to intercede with the King; but they found him inexorable; and later in the day some others went, and suffered a similar repulse. By-and-by the Chancellor went himself, and renewed his entreaties on the following day. When the King thought that there had been time for the execution of his commands, he gave way, and permitted counter-orders to be issued. These were at once despatched by a fleet messenger, who was warned, as he valued the Chancellor's patronage, not to rest either day or night till he reached Le Mans. He arrived just in time; the former messengers had already delivered their letters, but the Bishop's house was not yet

touched. Henry was afterwards glad enough to hear of the device which had thus saved him from the evil consequences of his own anger. Such anecdotes as these show us sufficiently clearly the character of the King with whom he had to deal, and lead us to wonder that during his chancellorship no greater injuries were inflicted on the Church.

From the extreme difficulty of his position we are hardly surprised at the statement made by his intimate friend, John of Salisbury,<sup>4</sup> that "he would, even with tears, tell the Archbishop and his friends that he was wearied of his very life, and that after the desire of salvation there was nothing he so longed for as to be able to disentangle himself without disgrace from the snares of the Court; for though the world seemed to flatter him in everything, yet he was not unmindful of his condition and duty, and thus he was obliged on the one hand to strive for the safety and honour of the King, and on the other for the needs of the Church and the bishops both against the King himself and against his enemies also, and by various arts to elude their various stratagems."

The Chronicle of Battle Abbey<sup>5</sup> gives an account of a matter in which St. Thomas, as Chancellor, was officially interested, and which has often been quoted as an example of his readiness at this period of his life, to side with the King against those principles of which he was afterwards the champion and the martyr. When, how-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, ii. p. 304.

<sup>5</sup> See Note D.

ever, the *ex parte* character of that chronicle is borne in mind, and the fragmentary shape in which the only speech of his in the cause of any importance has come down to us, there does not seem to be anything here to modify the judgment that the other acts of his chancellorship induce us to form.

Some modern writers have drawn from these facts conclusions most adverse to the character of St. Thomas. They say that one of two deductions is inevitable: either when he took the King's side in these acts of aggression on the Church he was sincere; and then the presumption is, that his sudden change of policy when made Archbishop was but a hypocritical scheme for furthering his own ambition: or he was insincere in the part which he played when Chancellor, the object of such double-dealing being to lead the King to think him hearty in his cause, and so to obtain his promotion to the coveted archbishopric.

This dilemma is as illogical as it is unjust. We have already shown that there is another manner of accounting for St. Thomas's conduct, which is historically far more probable than either of those thus objected. There is no reason whatever for supposing that his principles were not those of a true churchman during the intermediate time, spent in his chancellorship, between the days when he became the favourite of the Holy See as Archbishop Theobald's minister, and the later times when he was the Church's champion. If any of his biographers speak of a change in him

at his consecration, it is a change, not of principle, but of manner of life ; from worldliness to asceticism, from the courtier to the ecclesiastic and the saint.<sup>6</sup>

And as for ambition prompting such hypocrisy, it must needs have been an ambition to fall instead of to rise, to become less instead of greater in any worldly sense : for what to an ambitious man was the primacy, especially if he was resolved to resign the chancellorship, when compared with the chancellorship itself, as it was when he held it ? It is idle to say that he aimed at subduing the temporal order to the spiritual, and placing himself over both as the head of the nobler ; for his subsequent struggle was for the canonical independence of the clergy, and not for their advancement to temporal power. And what could the Chancellor, and such a Chancellor, gain by desiring a change ? Like Joseph in the house of Pharaoh, it was but in the royal throne that he was the King's inferior : knights and nobles swore fealty to him, reserving only their allegiance to the Sovereign ; he was the head of all the administration of justice ; he had the command of the army ; he could dispose of the whole kingdom at his pleasure ; he was supreme as the King's Prime Minister : would it not have been an ambition too short-sighted to be attributed to him, to throw away such a rule in the King's name in order to risk a contest with a powerful Sovereign for ever so brilliant a pre-eminence ?

The truth undoubtedly is, that St. Thomas

<sup>6</sup> See Note E.

clearly understood and knew how to manage the King's passionate temper. He knew how hopeless it was to resist him in his paroxysms of rage, and we consequently find him allowing the storm to pass over without attempting to combat it. There were occasions when he stood by and sorrowfully saw things done of which he could not approve, but with which he was not called on by his position to interfere, and which prudence, and the fear of destroying his influence and his means of good, taught him, whether in mistaken judgment or not, to bear with patiently: and if there were occasions when he showed more of the statesman and courtier than of the dutiful son of the Church, these instances were but few in number, and not of such a character as to overthrow our conclusion that St. Thomas, though as yet no saint according to the high and heroic estimate of the Church, still showed in his difficult position as Chancellor the material of which saints are made.

With such copious information before us respecting his chancellorship, we cannot be surprised that the biographer<sup>7</sup> of those who have held that high office should call him "one of the most distinguished men of any race that this island has ever produced." Manifesting from his childhood a singular love for truth; his heart ever full of compassion towards the poor and needy; with the gentlest spirit of condescension towards the timid and the humble, yet showing an indomitable courage and will in resisting the oppressor

<sup>7</sup> Lord Campbell's *Chancellors*, i. p. 59.

though bred in moderate circumstances, living amidst an unrivalled profusion of wealth and magnificence as if he had been accustomed to it from his cradle ; checking the rapacious tendency of a King and a Court against the Church, and yet, in spite of his natural vehemence of disposition, with such prudence that he has shared the blame of what he could not avert ; advancing daily in the fear of God and in Christian perfection, and yet so unaffectedly and unostentatiously that his very virtue is questioned ; leading an interior life of a sanctity that in some respects falls little short of the heroic :—we have before us one who, had he now died, and these details had reached us, we had justly regarded as one of the brightest and noblest characters in our history. How much happier we are, in being able to regard this as but the preface, the ushering-in of a far brighter and nobler destiny. In his after life the blemishes that we have observed are washed away. If he has been unjust to the Church, he atones for it by vindicating justice for her from the most violent and powerful. If he has forgotten the indelible character imprinted on his soul by Holy Orders, he is about to set to all men an example of the life a churchman should lead. If he has lived in too great magnificence for “the servant of a lowly Lord,” he does penance in the cowl of Citeaux. If he has had too great a love for popularity, or too much sense of human respect, he will shortly be mocked at and deserted, as well by bishop as by noble, in the Church's cause. And all the hardy virtues



✓ we have seen in him hitherto will flourish in their  
native climate of adversity; he who is just will  
✓ yet be justified, and he who is holy will yet be  
sanctified; and all will be crowned by a death  
which, as that of the saints, will be precious in  
the eyes of the King of the Martyrs and of the  
Divine Author and Guardian of the immunities of  
the Catholic Church. ✓

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE DEATH OF THEOBALD.

1158—1161.

Visit of the King and the Chancellor to Paris—Pope Alexander

III.—Archbishop Theobald's failing health and anxiety—  
abuses—vacancy of bishoprics—new Bishops of Coventry  
and Exeter—Theobald's desire for the return of the King  
and the Chancellor—the Archbishop's death.

IN 1158 King Henry and his Chancellor crossed over into France, where they were magnificently received by King Louis at Paris.<sup>1</sup> The Saint's politic negotiations gained from the French King what was felt to be a very great advantage towards the consolidation of Henry's continental dominions. The latter Sovereign was permitted, as seneschal of the King of France, to enter Brittany and exercise martial law on all who were disturbing the peace of that country. This was the King of England's first entry into Brittany; and he took occasion of it to gain possession of Nantes. King Louis returned his visit; passing through Le Mans to Mont St. Michel, and thence to Bayeux, Caen, and Rouen, where he was received with a magnificence equal to his own. It was in the next year, 1159, that the war of Toulouse occurred, on which we have already dwelt so much. And in 1159, on the

<sup>1</sup> Gerv. p. 166.

death of the English Pope, Adrian IV., Alexander III., was elected in his stead on the 7th of September. Under this Pope the rest of the life of St. Thomas was spent, and by him he was canonized.

In 1160 Theobald began to feel that his long reign in the chair of St. Augustine was drawing to a close. We must dwell for a short time on the cares that beset him, and rendered his last days anxious; for they will serve excellently to put us in possession of the feeling that existed respecting the relations of the Crown to the Church when the see of Canterbury fell vacant.

One of the abuses against which the aged Prelate struggled, and, through his foresight in placing St. Thomas with the King, not without success, was the long vacancy of bishoprics; which, though involving churches in widowhood, and leaving the people without a pastor, was an easy and tempting manner of recruiting the royal treasury. His spirit, preparing to give an account of his stewardship, would indeed have been grieved if he could have foreseen what St. Thomas a few years afterwards thus described to Pope Alexander: "To say nothing of the way in which the King treats the Churches of Canterbury and Tours, of which you have heard, and of which I wish you knew still more, now for some time past he holds in his own hands seven vacant bishoprics in our province and that of Rouen, nor will he suffer pastors to be there ordained. The clergy of the kingdom are given up to his officials, to be trodden down and treated as a prey." It

became a current saying, during a seventeen years' vacancy, that Lincoln would never have another bishop.

Robert Warelwast, Bishop of Exeter, died in 1159; and Theobald was very anxious that his see should be filled. He was a wealthy man, who had been presented in the first year of King Henry's reign; and John of Salisbury leads us to understand that his appointment had been uncanonical, if not simoniacal. This renders intelligible the following passage in a letter from Archbishop Theobald to the King; which is interesting as showing, as several others of his writings also do, the misgivings with which the Primate sank into his grave. "The children of this world suggest to you to diminish the authority of the Church, in order to increase your royal dignity. They are certainly your Majesty's enemies, and provoke the indignation of God, whoever they may be. It is He Who has extended your boundaries; it is He Who has advanced your glory. It is wicked in you to diminish the glory of your Lord and Benefactor; it merits chastisement, and the severest chastisement beyond doubt it will receive; nay, by God's grace there shall be no chastisement, for by His help it shall not be done. The Spouse of the Church addresses you by my mouth. Peter, the Shepherd of all, the Prince of the Apostles, addresses you; and all the saints earnestly beseech you, that if you would have them for the patrons and guardians of your realm and reign, you would permit a pastor to be ordained

according to the Lord for the Church of Exeter, and would strive to rescue it from shipwreck. It was the first in the kingdom to which you looked. See, I beg, my lord, what has come of it. You know whom He excluded from the Church, Who drove out those who sold doves; and God forbid that any one should enter in whom Christ shut out. I pledge myself a surety for St. Peter, that the honour which you show to him he will repay a hundredfold, even in this world." This, which sounds almost as a voice from the tomb, apparently produced but little effect; for the King would have appointed Robert Fitzharding, an illiterate and useless person, if the Canons of Exeter had not refused to elect him.

The Archbishop's wish, which he prosecuted with great fervour, was that the see might be given to Bartholomew, then Archdeacon of that Church; for whom, he said, he was willing to pledge himself to the King. It is edifying to be able to add that Bartholomew knew nothing of the application thus made in his behalf. Theobald pressed his request on Henry with the energy of a man who feels that he has no time to lose. He himself wrote to the Chancellor; and another still more urgent letter to St. Thomas was from John of Salisbury, who says that the Archbishop was beginning to be dispirited as to his personal influence with Henry. He was then ill in his bed. The letter adds that they had heard that the King had conferred the income of three vacant bishoprics on St. Thomas, but

that such a report had not caused them to doubt of his mediation; for they had none of them forgotten the advantages which Lincoln, York, and many other Churches had received at his hands. Theobald had the consolation of communicating, by means of his faithful John of Salisbury, this appointment to Bartholomew; and he sent for him, that he, with Richard, Bishop-elect of Coventry, might be consecrated, if not by him, at least in his presence. His brother Walter,<sup>2</sup> Bishop of Rochester, consecrated the Bishop of Coventry in the chapel into which Theobald was carried; but Bartholomew's consecration was postponed until he had done homage to the King. He crossed the sea, and returned with all haste, but Theobald had died before his arrival. The Bishop of Rochester consecrated him at Christ Church, Canterbury, at the request of the Prior and community.

In Bartholomew's election, the solicitude of Theobald's last moments was successful. Coventry had had an unusually short vacancy; but, in spite of all his efforts, he left London, Worcester, and Bangor without bishops.

As his end drew near, he felt the absence of the King and St. Thomas very deeply. His letters to both of them, pleading to be allowed to see their faces once more before he died, are very touching. Again and again he writes to the King: "We petition your Majesty that it may please you, as we believe it to be the pleasure of God, that you would return to your own peculiar

<sup>2</sup> Gerv. p. 168.

people. Let their loyalty move you, and the affection of your children, from whom the sternest parent could hardly bear to be so long separated; let the love of your wife move you, the beauty of the country, and that union of delights we cannot enumerate; and, not to forget my own case, let my desolation move you, for my age and sickness will not let me wait long for your desired coming. In this hope I wait; and with many a sigh I say to myself, 'Will not my Christ give me to see him whom at my desire He gave me to anoint?'" And then he begs that the King will at least send him his Archdeacon. "He is the only one we have, and the first of our Council. He ought to have come unsummoned; and unless your need of him had excused him, he had been guilty of disobedience before God and man. But since we have ever preferred your will to our own, and have determined to further it in all that is lawful, we forgive him his fault; wishing him to remain in your service as long as you need him, and ordering him to give his whole zeal and attention to your wants: but permit him to return as soon as ever you can spare him." And this he unites to his prayer for the Church of Exeter, beseeching with equal energy *de remittendo cancellario, et promovendo negotio Exoniensis Ecclesiæ*.

In the same tone he writes to St. Thomas, anxious beyond measure to see him, but warning him not to incur the King's displeasure; for he doubted his own influence, and he reminded him that favour for the sake of the dead, amongst whom he expected soon to be numbered, was not

to be relied upon. John of Salisbury at the same time writes to say that he had never known the Archbishop equally anxious about anything, so that they had even thought of forcing St. Thomas to return by threat of censures. But they had been induced to be patient by the report, the importance of which they would be the last to undervalue, of the perfect unanimity between the King and the Chancellor. "It is publicly said that you have one heart and one soul, and that your friendly familiarity is so strong, that you like and dislike the same things. The whole Court hangs upon your counsel."

The wish so fervently expressed was not gratified. What the dying Prelate longed to press upon the King and the Chancellor, if he had been permitted to see them, is sufficiently clear from the letters which accompanied his will. Besides the question of subsidies, he urged that none of his ecclesiastical arrangements should be interfered with, excommunicating any one who might venture to do so. Under a similar censure he forbade any interference with his Church of Canterbury, especially any alienation of its lands; he requested that the King would permit his property to be divided amongst the poor, towards whom he had during life always shown great charity; and he wrote most earnestly to Henry respecting his own successor. "I beseech you to hear me, as you would have God hear you at your last breath. I send you and your children a blessing from our Lord Jesus Christ; and do you, I pray, send my desolate ones your Majesty's



consolation. I commend to you the holy Church of Canterbury, from which, by my ministry, you received the reins of government, that you may defend it from the attacks of wicked men: and to me, who, though unworthy, have yet, by God's help, ruled it as best I knew how, give as successor such a pastor as may not be unworthy of so great a see, who may delight in religion, and the merits of whose virtue may find favour with God. Your faithful servant must give you counsel; and, before the Lord and His saints, this is my counsel: Seek not in this matter what is your own, but the Lord's; for I answer to you for Him, that if you will have a faithful care for His cause, He will greatly advance yours."

Theobald had been Archbishop two-and-twenty years when he died, on April 18, 1161. He was buried in the mother-church of England, soon to be rendered so famous by the death and relics of his immediate successor. Nineteen years after his death his tomb was opened, and his body was found to be entire and uncorrupt. His soul we trust is with God. His see was vacant for one year, a month, and fourteen days; and when next there was an Archbishop, it was St. Thomas of Canterbury.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NEW ARCHBISHOP.

1161—1162.

The Chancellor returns to England—the King resolves he shall be Archbishop—intimation to the monks—election at Westminster—Foliot's conduct—Archbishop-elect discharged of all liabilities—he goes to Canterbury—his ordination and consecration—feast of the Blessed Trinity—the pallium.

THE year of Theobald's death passed over quietly, the revenues of the see being as usual intrusted to the Chancellor's care. The free-spoken Prior of Leicester has already shown us that the current belief was that the Chancellor was to be Theobald's successor.

✓ In the spring of 1162, King Henry determined to send St. Thomas over into England to provide against the incursions of the Welsh, and on other public business of importance. Just as the Chancellor was about to start upon his journey, he went to salute the King at the Castle of Falaise in Normandy. Henry took him on one side, and said, "You do not yet know altogether the cause of your journey. It is my will that you should be Archbishop of Canterbury." On this the Chancellor, looking down at his dress, which was gay, said with a smile, "What a religious man, what a saint you wish to place in that holy bishopric and over so famous a monastery! I am certain that ✓

if, by God's disposal, it were so to happen, the love and favour you now bear towards me would speedily turn into the bitterest hatred. I know that you would require many things, as even now you do require them, in church matters, which I could never bear quietly; and so the envious would take occasion to provoke an endless strife between us." The King was utterly unmoved by this, and in the Chancellor's presence instructed the nobles who were to accompany him in his mission, that they were to intimate this his desire to the monks of Canterbury and to the clergy of the kingdom. He then turned to one of them in particular, Richard de Luci, whose position about the King's person was very confidential, and said to him, "Richard, if I lay dead on my bier, would you not strive that my eldest son Henry should be crowned King?" He replied, "My lord, I would with all my might." "I wish you to take as much pains," rejoined Henry, "for the promotion of the Chancellor to the see of Canterbury." A few years later the expressions that he had here used often recurred to the mind of St. Thomas as almost prophetic, and during his exile his companions frequently heard him allude to them or recount them. They accord precisely with what he had said to the Prior of Leicester.

In the month of May, 1162,<sup>1</sup> the King sent three Bishops, with Richard de Luci and Walter his brother the Abbot of Battle, to Canterbury, to summon the Prior and monks to hold an election. When they were assembled in the chapter-house,

<sup>1</sup> Gerv. p. 169.

Richard addressed the community, enlarging upon the King's filial devotion to the Church of Canterbury, which induced him without further delay to send them free leave to elect; and in conclusion pointing out to them the necessity there was that the object of their choice should be acceptable to the King.

The summons was to London, that they might there meet the Bishops of the province at Westminster;<sup>2</sup> and thither accordingly Wibert the Prior and the senior monks of the chapter betook themselves. The electors speedily came to the conclusion that their wisest course would be to consult the King's representatives as to the person who would be most acceptable to him. They did not immediately elect the Chancellor when he was proposed to them by Richard de Luci. It was not any repugnance to St. Thomas personally that led them to hesitate; but it was their feeling, as religious, that the successor of the Apostle of England should be a child of St. Benedict, as Theobald and the majority of those who had filled that throne had been. His intimacy with the King appears to have been regarded from two different points of view. Some thought that it was calculated to promote harmony between the Church and State; while others considered it dangerous, as destroying the independence which alone could hope to resist any undue encroachments of the civil power. Though doubtless the

<sup>2</sup> Gervase, who was admitted as a monk at Christ Church not long after this election, says London, and Herbert Westminster; Roger de Pontigny places the election at Canterbury.

expression of the King's will was contrary to that perfect freedom of election which the Church desires, and to which she has a right ; yet, from all that has come down to us, it would seem that there was no such direct influence or intimidation of the electors used as would nullify the election, as there had been in Stephen's reign in the case of St. William of York. Quite enough there was to raise a suspicion of its canonical character, and this St. Thomas himself represented in the strongest terms a few years afterwards to Pope Alexander. However, as far as the forms go, all seems valid ; and at the close of the election Wibert announced to the bishops and abbots, who, together with the priors of conventual houses, and the earls and other nobles, with the King's officials, were assembled together at Westminster by royal mandate, that they had elected as Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas, the King's Chancellor.

There was but one dissentient voice raised at this announcement. Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of Hereford, was the only one who was dissatisfied. The report was very widespread that he was himself ambitious of the vacant primacy. The belief in the justice of this charge receives much strength from the fact that when, after St. Thomas's martyrdom, the primacy once more fell vacant, he had again to defend himself from the same accusation in a long letter to the King. However, finding himself alone and unsupported, he changed his tactics, and became the loudest in praise of the election. For this reason some well-

informed writers deny that he ever disturbed the unanimity with which the name of St. Thomas was received. It must be borne in mind that Gilbert was not himself an elector; for it was the privilege of the community of Christ Church to elect the Archbishop, who was *ex officio* their Abbot also. Gilbert was present as one of the suffragan Bishops of the province.

St. Thomas was in consequence of the King's absence presented to his pupil, Prince Henry, then a boy in his eighth year,<sup>3</sup> who, even before his coronation, is sometimes called the young King; and he, as well as Richard de Luci and the other officials whom the King had commissioned, gave full assent to the election. Henry of Winchester, the brother of the late King Stephen, then said: "The Lord Chancellor, our elect, has now been long in the palace of the King your father, and has had the highest place in the kingdom, having had the whole realm at his disposal, so that nothing has been done save by his will: wherefore we beg that he may be given over to the Church of God and to us, free, and absolved from every obligation of the Court, from every complaint and calumny, and from all claims; so that from this hour henceforward, unshackled and free, he may attend to the things of God. For we know that the King your father has delegated to you his powers in this matter, and that he will ratify whatever you ordain." This petition was fully

<sup>3</sup> The Lansdowne MS. says that the Prince was ten years old, but he was born in March, 1155 (Gerv. p. 161).

granted, and St. Thomas was given over to the Church free from all secular obligations hitherto contracted. This release by the King was so well known and understood that at Northampton St. Thomas appealed to it as within the knowledge of all present; and, later on, John of Salisbury wrote, "Who is there who did not know that the King gave his Chancellor over, free from all administration and obligation, to the government of the Church of Canterbury?"<sup>4</sup>

The objections that St. Thomas had previously made to his appointment had been overruled by the arguments and authority of Henry of Pisa, Cardinal of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, who was the Pope's Legate in France. As soon, therefore, as the proceedings of the election were concluded in London, he set out for Canterbury, to be consecrated in the metropolitan church. He was accompanied by a great number of bishops and nobles; his position as the head of the English hierarchy, as well as Prime Minister of the Crown, naturally attracting multitudes, and rendering them anxious to do him all honour. During the journey he called Herbert of Bosham aside, who now appears for the first time personally in the history, though evidently already on familiar terms with the Archbishop-elect; and told him privately that in a dream that night a venerable person had stood beside him and given him ten talents. Herbert tells us that he attached no meaning to it at the time, but that afterwards he bethought him of the good servant in the Gospel

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 97.

who doubled the talents intrusted to him. The tenour of his meditations by day is betrayed to us by the dreams of the night. How to trade with his ten talents his meditations taught him, and he who was faithful over the few is now the ruler over many.

In the course of the same journey he bade Herbert always come and tell him in confidence what others might say of him, and if he thought him wrong in any thing, at once to point it out to him; "for," he added, "four eyes see more clearly than two." And Herbert thinks that he gave the same commission to others also. The Saint was, indeed, losing no time. The powerful will, which had made him without a rival in worldly matters, was now brought to bear with all its force on the work of his own sanctification. These glimpses of the passage of a noble soul to spiritual heroism are inexpressibly precious.

On Saturday in Whitsun week<sup>5</sup> he was ordained priest in Canterbury Cathedral by his old friend Walter, Bishop of Rochester, "the Vicar of the Church of Canterbury for ordinations and dedications." For the honourable office of consecrating the Primate in the solemn function which had been fixed for the following day, there were several claimants. Roger, the Archbishop of York, anxious we must suppose for his dignity, rather than desirous of showing any affection for the Archbishop-elect, though he was not himself present, sent messengers to put in his claim to

<sup>5</sup> Gerv. p. 170.



perform the consecration. The bishops acknowledged that it was an ancient right of the see of York; but it was overruled in this instance, because Roger had made no profession of subjection or due obedience to the Church of Canterbury. A Welsh Bishop also put in a claim, on the ground that he was the oldest Bishop, having been the first consecrated of the living hierarchy. Walter of Rochester claimed the right in virtue of his being the chaplain of the Archbishop. Some spoke for the Bishop of Winchester, who was cantor or precentor in Canterbury Cathedral. The bishopric of London was vacant; but the chapter wrote to petition that the Bishop of Winchester, who was administering sacraments in London during the vacancy of the see, might be selected. This request was acceded to out of respect for the venerable Henry of Blois, Walter giving way under a protest that it should be accounted no precedent against the rights of the Church of Rochester.

Thus, on the octave of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, the 3rd of June, 1162, St. Thomas was consecrated a Bishop in the metropolitan church by Henry of Winchester, in the presence of nearly all his suffragans, as well as a vast multitude of abbots, religious, clerics, and nobles, Prince Henry himself being there. At the eastern end of the Cathedral was a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Trinity. Immediately after his consecration and enthronement in the ancient Patriarchal Chair behind the high altar, St. Thomas said Mass in the chapel of the Blessed Trinity,

behind the Throne—his “first Mass,” Gervase calls it, as indeed it was if we pass over the concelebrations in his priestly ordination and episcopal consecration. This chapel was his favourite resort when he was in Canterbury. Here he said Mass both before his exile and after his return. Here he would come to assist privately at the office of the monks in choir, and he would frequently retire to the same chapel for prayer. On a screen on the right of the high altar, between it and the chapel of the Blessed Trinity, lay St. Odo; on the left, St. Wilfrid; by the south wall of the chapel was the resting-place of Lanfranc, and by the north wall that of Theobald. Beneath the chapel was the crypt, containing on the south side an altar dedicated to St. Augustine, the Apostle of England, and on the north side the altar of St. John the Baptist. Between these two altars in the crypt St. Thomas was buried the day after his martyrdom, and there his body lay until the site of the chapel he had loved best in life was prepared to receive his shrine. The altar-stone was prized on which the Saint had said his first Mass, and of it an altar was made that was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist.

Practically on the day of his consecration St. Thomas said two Masses. This he was free to do, as the decree of Alexander II.,<sup>6</sup> familiar to him as included in the *Decretum* of his old master Gratian, did not forbid the celebration of two Masses if offered through devotion. This was

<sup>6</sup> Can. *Sufficit*, *De consecratione*, dist. 1.

not forbidden before the decree of Innocent III.,<sup>7</sup> subsequent to the time of St. Thomas. As to the festival of the Blessed Trinity, Alexander II.<sup>8</sup> says that while in some churches it was kept on the octave of Pentecost, and in others on the Sunday before Advent, the Roman Church kept no such special feast, being content with its daily devotions to that great mystery. That the festival was already observed at Canterbury in the Cathedral seems probable, as the monastery had this for a second title, letters being frequently addressed, even by the Popes, to the Convent of the Blessed Trinity<sup>9</sup> as well as to the Church of Christ at Canterbury. The title of a chapel would hardly be celebrated as a feast of the Church, as Fitzstephen<sup>10</sup> describes this, but the festival may well have been kept as a Titular Feast of the Cathedral. Gervase<sup>11</sup> is therefore speaking of the extension of the festival to the whole province of Canterbury, when he says that "Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury, when consecrated, instituted the principal feast of the Holy Trinity to be kept every year for ever on the day of the octave of Pentecost, on which day he himself celebrated his first Mass."<sup>12</sup> The feast

<sup>7</sup> Cap. *Consuluisti*, *De celebratione missarum*.

<sup>8</sup> Cap. *Quoniam*, *De feriis*, wrongly attributed to Alexander III. Bened. XIV., *De Festis*, cap. xii.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, *Materials*, vi. p. 418.

<sup>10</sup> Octava Pentecostes, *Ecclesiæ Cantuariensis festa die Sanctæ Trinitatis* (Fitzstephen, p. 36).

<sup>11</sup> P. 171.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Birchington, a monk of Canterbury, who lived two centuries after Gervase, and has copied this phrase from him, is sometimes quoted as the authority for the statement.

was extended to the Universal Church by Pope John XXII. in the early part of the fourteenth century.

We return now to St. Thomas and the prelate who consecrated him.

From his high position both as brother of King Stephen and Legate for several years of the Holy See, the Bishop of Winton had gained a very wide experience of public affairs. Few were better fitted to judge of the course the new Archbishop would be obliged to pursue. His speech to the Prince is a very distinct intimation of the view that he had taken; but immediately after the consecration he expressed himself far more plainly.<sup>13</sup> "Dearest brother," he said, "I give you now the choice of two things; beyond a doubt you must lose the favour of the earthly or of the heavenly King." Raising his hands and looking up to heaven, as he knelt for the blessing of his consecrator, our Saint replied, with an earnestness that brought tears to the eyes of both, "By God's help and strength I now make my choice, and never for the love and favour of an earthly king will I forego the grace of the Kingdom of Heaven." When the news, years afterwards, reached Henry of Blois, that the head he had that day anointed had in that same church received the death-wound of martyrdom, he exclaimed, "Thank God that it was my privilege to consecrate him!"

St. Thomas was still but Archbishop-elect. He

<sup>13</sup> Girald. Cambren. ap. Wharton, *Angl. Sacra*, London 1691, ii. p. 420.

had received in his consecration the plenitude of the sacerdotal power ; he had been raised to that order to which by Divine right priests are subject ; but jurisdiction flows from the See of Peter only, and that jurisdiction which the canon law gives to Archbishops-elect St. Thomas as yet had, and no more. The symbol of the completeness of metropolitan authority, which is a delegation of power over brother-bishops from him who has power over all, is the pallium, which is blessed by the Pope on the eve of SS. Peter and Paul, and which, from the shrine where it is then placed, is said to be sent "from the body of blessed Peter."

Immediately after St. Thomas had been consecrated, he sent his messengers to Montpellier, where Pope Alexander III. then was. They were six in number, and amongst them was the Treasurer of York,<sup>14</sup> the Abbot of Evesham, one of the monks of Canterbury, and John of Salisbury. They were the bearers of letters from the Bishops, from the Prior and community, and from the King, relating what had been done, and praying for the pallium. It was readily granted by the Pope,<sup>15</sup> and solemnly received by St. Thomas on St. Laurence's day, the 10th of August, 1162, after the usual oath, at the high altar of his Cathedral. He went barefoot to meet those who were bringing this symbol of his dependence on the Apostolic See ; a fitting act of devotion for the beginning of his reign as Archbishop of Canterbury.

<sup>14</sup> This was John of Canterbury, our Saint's old companion in the court of Theobald, whose name we shall frequently meet later on as the Bishop of Poitiers, his fast friend.

<sup>15</sup> Diceto, p. 534 ; Gerv. p. 172.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ARCHBISHOP IN HIS CHURCH.

1162.

Sanctity of the new Archbishop—change of circumstances—  
manner of life—hospitality to the poor—study of Holy  
Scripture—private prayer—Mass—his dress—affiliation to  
religious orders—the stole—Confirmation.

THE Sacrament of Holy Orders wrought a glorious work in the soul of St. Thomas. Hitherto we have called him Saint by anticipation; now it is his deserved, well-earned title. It does not seem too much to say, with the knowledge of the detail of his life as a prelate which has been preserved for our edification, that even if it had not pleased God to mark His love for him by conferring upon him the crown of martyrdom, he would have been held forth to us by the Church as a confessor, as so many of his predecessors in his see have been; and we should have still venerated, though with one honour wanting, St. Thomas of Canterbury. But, thank God, that honour too was not withheld, and in the brightness of the glory of the martyr the dignity of the confessor has been absorbed; so that while for the one we have the Church's unerring judgment, for the estimate of the other we are left to our convictions.

The change of external circumstances affecting

our Saint was very great. When the multitude of prelates and nobles who had attended the consecration had left Canterbury, he remained in the church to which he was now wedded. Hitherto he had lived at court and in camp the life of a Norman noble of the highest rank, surrounded by all the appliances of the greatest luxury and magnificence, as remarkable for worldly grandeur as for his unblemished life. Now he had suddenly become not only the first of the hierarchy of a great kingdom, but the resident superior of a large religious house. The internal government of the monastery of Christ Church was carried on by the Cathedral Prior; but the Archbishop was the head or abbot of the community.

✓ The outlines of his life were derived from the Rule of St. Benedict, by which the monks were governed; but the manner in which those outlines were filled up was his own, and very characteristic of him. The first duty that was quite new to him was attendance at choir. Matins broke in upon every night's rest; for the recitation of this part of the Divine Office always occupied the dead of the night. When this was over, thirteen poor men were daily taken into a private room, where the Saint washed and kissed their feet, and then waited on them, serving up to them with his own hands a plentiful meal. They were dismissed about daybreak, each with four pieces of money. His object in selecting so early an hour for this act of humility and charity was that it might be strictly private, as well as that he

might not be hindered from performing it by other occupations. The custom was maintained even in his absence, for then one of the convent guestmasters took his place. We shall form some idea of the assistance the poor received from one of the greater monasteries, on learning that when these thirteen poor men left, on whom the Archbishop had attended in person, twelve others were treated by a guestmaster with equal hospitality, differing only from the first in this, that they did not receive the alms in money; and that later on in the morning, at nine o'clock, a plentiful meal was set before one hundred poor persons, who were then called "prebendaries" or pensioners.

At daybreak St. Thomas retired to his room; and after a short time given to sleep, he aroused himself promptly, and while others were resting themselves after the nightly interruption of their repose by the Divine Office, he was intent on the study of the Sacred Scriptures. That this study might be more fruitful as well as safe, he was attended at this hour by Herbert of Bosham, who tells us that his holy master had thus singled him out for this intimate intercourse with him. The Saint's devotion for the Holy Scriptures was so great, that often when out riding, he would draw up, and call Herbert to confer with him on some point of sacred learning. At such times he would say, "Oh that I could lay aside the cares of the world, and in peace and quietness attend to sacred studies! how carefully I would atone for the time I have lost!" In his full loose sleeves he would



carry a few pages, that so he might ever have by him the means of his favourite occupation, when he had a little occasional or accidental leisure. He surrounded himself by persons skilled in all kinds of ecclesiastical learning, from whose conversation he derived much profit. The result of this was seen in the quickness wherewith he prepared himself for that important portion of the duty of a bishop, preaching both to clergy and people.

After the striking exhibition of diffidence and humility shown in this reliance on the assistance of another, the instructor to whom the Saint showed such docility left him; and until nine o'clock no one was permitted to disturb his union with God under any pretext whatever. Of this precious time God and the saints and angels were the sole witnesses. At nine he came out of his room, either to say Mass, or to assist at it. "For he did not say Mass every day; and this was, as he himself said, not through negligence, but reverence."

While St. Thomas received the sacred vestments for Mass from the ministers, his changing countenance, and the tears in his eyes, betrayed how deeply his heart was affected at the solemn act of offering sacrifice, like a good pontiff, for his own sins and those of his people. During the early part of the Mass, which is called the Mass of Catechumens, to preserve himself from distraction while the ministers were singing, he would read some devout book. His favourite on these occasions was a little prayer-book composed, with

much unction and devotion, by his blessed predecessor Anselm of holy memory. He generally said one collect in the Mass, sometimes three, but very seldom more. He was careful that his Mass should be short; and Herbert, in whose words these interesting details are given, assigns, as the reason for his saying it rapidly, one with which he must have been familiar, inasmuch as it is given in the Rubric of the Sarum Missal when exhorting the priest not to dwell too long on his *Memento*, "for fear of distractions and suggestions by evil angels;" adding that thus he verified in the august sacrifice of the Gospel the words spoken of its shadow and type, "Ye shall eat it in haste; for it is the Phase, that is, the passover of the Lord." Those who were often present at his Mass bear witness to the tears and sighs the presence of his Lord drew from him, and to the very great devotion with which he celebrated. "When he was alone," says another of his intimate friends, "he shed tears in wonderful abundance; and when he stood at the altar, he seemed in very presence in the flesh to see the Passion of the Lord. He handled the Divine Sacraments with great reverence, so that his very handling of them strengthened the faith and fervour of those who witnessed it."

All his monks knew that Theobald's successor was sure to prove an able Archbishop; but many of them must have feared lest he should be a worldly one. The heartiness of his adoption of a strictly devout and religious life must have speedily removed all their misgivings; and yet,

singularly enough, there was one point which for a while offended them. But one thing recalled the magnificence of the Chancellor, and that was his dress. It may have been that he retained his gay attire in order to conceal the interior change that was taking place within him, and to secure himself from the observation of the Court. It was at this very Pentecost of his consecration that he first put on his hair-shirt; it was not, therefore, from a worldly feeling that he did not conform himself in dress to his new manner of life. The monks, however, might well be scandalized at the incongruity of his attending choir in his gay secular dress. With the freedom which he ever allowed and encouraged in his friends, in a manner so characteristic of his greatness of mind, one of the religious, who was more intimate with him than the others, reproved him for it, and undertook to relate to him a dream that one of the community had had regarding it. "Go tell *the Chancellor*," a grave and venerable personage had seemed to say to him, by the title he made use of marking his indignation, "to change his dress without delay; and if he refuse to do so, I will oppose him all the days of his life." To the reproof St. Thomas made no reply, but he burst into tears.

By the close of the year in which he was consecrated he had laid aside his valuable and coloured dress, with its foreign and variegated furs, and put on a black cappa, which was closed all round and reached his feet, and which was made of a material of little value, and was adorned with

lambswool instead of fur. This dress he was in the habit of frequently changing, in order that he might give away those that he had worn to clothe the poor. The black cappa he continued to wear all his life, with a surplice of fine linen over it. He is described as wearing it at Northampton, and he was in it when he was martyred. Some writers tell us that between the two habits, the one of penance, known as yet to none but his spiritual director, and the other, even more humbly ecclesiastical than his dignity required, he wore the dress of a monk; and they thus describe him as being at once an example to the cleric, the monk, and the hermit; but this would seem to be an anticipation of the Cistercian cowl which he received at Pontigny, blessed by the Pope, which also he wore at his martyrdom.

The black cappa with lambswool, and the linen surplice, was not the monastic habit of his monks of Christ Church. It was that of the Black Canons Regular, to which Order Merton Abbey belonged. When a boy there at school, he had doubtless worn the same habit as the religious among whom he lived. It was therefore natural that, being surrounded by a chapter of religious, and sitting on a throne which had been rarely occupied save by religious, when he sought to show even by his habit that he had devoted himself to the service of God, not being himself a Benedictine, he should resume that habit which he had worn when young, and with which were associated his recollections of strictness and holiness of life.

This variety of habit worn by the Saint has produced the very singular result that St. Thomas, whom the secular clergy venerate as a secular, is claimed by two religious orders as a regular. In the Martyrology approved by the Holy See for the Canons Regular, St. Thomas is mentioned as a Saint of the Order, to be kept by all its various branches; and it is said that, in order that he might serve God more freely and securely, he professed the Institute of the Canons Regular. The word "professed" can hardly mean more than that he was in some sense associated or affiliated to the Order. The Cistercians, in their Martyrology, give only the historical fact that our Saint, when "driven into exile from his see and from England for the defence of justice and of ecclesiastical immunity, took refuge at Pontigny, a monastery of the Cistercian Order, and there put on a cowl which was blessed by Pope Alexander III., in which cowl he was buried, when, after his return to England, he was slain by the sword by a band of wicked men in his own basilica, and so went to Christ and was adorned with many great miracles."

There is one detail more in the dress of the new Archbishop worthy of our notice, the more so as it is one of those episcopal practices of the middle ages, which survive now in the usages of the Sovereign Pontiff alone.

The Saint was accustomed to wear his stole openly and constantly; and his object was that he might ever be ready to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. He was remarkable for

his devotion to this sacrament, and for his readiness at all times to administer it. Bishops in those days would give Confirmation even on horseback. St. Thomas always alighted for that purpose,<sup>6</sup> but would often administer the sacrament in the open air. At several places, where he was known to have done so, crosses were afterwards set up by the roadside, and became famous for miracles. The custom of constantly wearing his stole he discontinued during his exile; but he resumed it on his return to his province, shortly before his death.

<sup>6</sup> Benedict, p. 164.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ARCHBISHOP IN HIS PALACE.

1162.

Public life—the dining-hall—the Saint's hospitality—his almsgiving—life amongst the religious—ordinations—confirmation of episcopal elections—his conduct as judge—his seal—his hair-shirt.

WE have not yet followed our Saint through the whole of a day's occupations in his new home. We now pass from the more private acts of devotion to the public details of his life; we accompany him from the choir and the altar to the refectory and the episcopal chancery.

✓ He may be said almost to have dined in public, so many sat down to table with him. He occupied the middle place at the dais at the end of the hall: on his right were placed his personal companions, whose character is well shown by the title by which they have come down to us, as his *eruditi*; on his left sat the monks and religious. His soldiers and other lay retainers dined at a separate table, lest they might be annoyed by having to listen to the book<sup>1</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> To read in refectory was one of the duties of the cross-bearer. Prince Henry is said to have waited at table, "when he chose." To do so was but to exercise one of the duties of chivalry, and he would share such duties with the sons of noble-

was read aloud during the Archbishop's dinner. He would not permit musical instruments to be played during the meal; a custom then so general, that in almost every dining-hall a gallery was built for the purpose: but he would occasionally interrupt the reading to discuss some question of interest, often a point from Holy Scripture, with his friends.

Though valuable plate of gold and silver was spread upon his table, as it had been under former archbishops, his heart was no longer set on magnificence. His temperance was worthy of note, and his moderation was the more striking from the necessity that the habits of many years imposed upon him that his food should not be coarser than that to which he had been accustomed. One day, a person who was dining with him remarked with a smile on the delicacy of his food; the natural warmth of disposition and energy of the Saint speak in his characteristic answer: "Certes, brother, if I am not mistaken, you take your bean with greater eagerness than I the pheasant before me." Herbert quietly bears witness that the rebuke was deserved. "This person lived with us awhile," he says; "and, though he did not care for delicacies, for he was not used to them, he was truly a glutton of grosser food." Of such things, however, he

men who were in the Archbishop's retinue. Herbert tells us, that while it was usual for the barons and earls to devote their eldest sons to the King's service, their second sons were intrusted to the care of the Archbishop of Canterbury (Herb. *Anecd.* *Bed.* pp. 110, 112).



eat very sparingly; and while he would taste the wine that was set before him, and the dishes that were brought to table, his principal food was bread; and his usual drink was water in which fennel had been boiled.

As he sat at table, his large clear eye would wander round the room; and if he saw that any one who had a claim to a more honourable position had by accident been seated in a low place, he would atone for it by sending him a share of his own cup and his own dish. He was also watchful that the domestics each performed their duty; and if any one were neglectful, he was certain to receive a reprimand in due time and place. The Saint was sure to notice the absence of any one of his own companions. If a stranger came to visit him, he did not place him amongst them, lest some word might be dropped in their conversation which it was not advisable should be overheard; unless it should happen to be some person remarkable rather for his piety and learning than for dignity, whom St. Thomas would invite by name. Others were honourably entertained at another table, where the Saint would send them frequent marks of his attention. Herbert adds, that it was the custom of his predecessors, which he followed, not to have any one about him as a cleric, much less as a counsellor, who was bound by special obligations to the King, in consequence of the difficulty such a person would feel if any misunderstanding should arise between the King and the Archbishop.

He never sat down without a number of poor

having places assigned to them in the refectory; and his table was the more liberally furnished that a plentiful meal might remain for distribution. He had always been renowned for the exercise of hospitality and for a profuse liberality, and the poor were not the losers by the reduction of splendour in his mode of life. A beggar never left his door empty-handed. Theobald, his pious master, had doubled the alms which his predecessors had been in the habit of distributing; St. Thomas doubled those of Theobald, and he devoted to these pious uses the tenth of all that he received from any source. He would also send to hospitals and poor colleges sometimes four or five marks, sometimes gifts of provisions. He caused his attendants to visit the sick and aged; of these many became his daily pensioners; and, as winter came on, he gave away an abundance of warm clothing.

These details of his bountiful almsgiving have led us away once more from the order of his day; we have brought it, however, nearly to a close. After dinner he retired with his friends into his private room, when a portion of time was devoted to conferences on ecclesiastical subjects. Occasionally, when he found that he required it, he would sleep for a little while in the afternoon.<sup>1</sup>

One of his favourite resorts was the cloister, where he might often be seen like one of the monks, perusing some book. The infirmary also

<sup>1</sup> The siesta of an Eastern Archbishop at Canterbury is mentioned by William of Canterbury, p. 437.

was very attractive to him ; and he would delight in attending to the wants of the sick religious. He always had a great love for the religious orders, and this he would show by the respect and veneration monks ever received from him. In the Ember week in September after his consecration he held an ordination ; and in no one of his duties as Archbishop was he more careful or anxious than in his choice of subjects for Holy Orders. His anxiety on another point soon appeared ; for he would speak to his companions on his determination never to confirm the election of an unfit person to a bishopric ; and he would regret, frequently and earnestly, the appearance of unfitness in his own case, saying, when his friends would console him by instances of others who under such circumstances had made excellent bishops, that they were miracles of the grace of God. On this point, however, his determination was not tried ; the only two persons consecrated by him were well worthy of the episcopal dignity.

With a judicial office he was of course familiar ; and that which he had held, in those early days of equity, was not unfit for an ecclesiastic. Now, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he was also a judge ; and this, the highest Church court of the realm, was scarcely inferior in importance to the secular judgment-seat of the Chancellor. His qualities fitted him in a high degree for the office of a judge : his resistance to the injustice and insolence of the powerful was almost proverbial ; and his impartiality was such, that Fitzstephen,

who was an official in his chancery, tells us that "the letters and prayers of the King himself were of no use to a man unless he had right on his side." With witnesses he was a patient and careful listener, and his questions were shrewd and penetrating. His judgments were promptly given; but of all his good qualities his integrity receives the highest praise, as if it were not in those times too common a virtue. If he was aware that a man had a cause pending in his court, he invariably refused to receive from him any present, even of the value of a farthing, except the offer were of articles of food, which could not well be refused. A similar course was enjoined, both publicly and privately, upon all his officials, except only the advocates who practised there. There is a story told of a certain abbot, who went from one to another who were in a position to help him with the offer of a present, which, to his astonishment, every one refused. Indeed the Archbishop had bound Ernulf, his chancellor, by oath to take no fee, with or without compact, for any portion of his work, down to the very use of the penknife.<sup>2</sup> Happily the good Abbot could rely on the justice of his cause; for he went away, we learn, successful in his suit, with his money in his pocket, and the words of Ecclesiasticus on his lips: "Blessed is the man who has not gone after gold." There was no fee for the sealbearer, nor for signatures,

<sup>2</sup> *Usque ad canipulum*, i.e. canif, knife (A.S. cnif.), an instrument for nipping (Skeat; Peter Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, c. 28; *Materials*, iv. p. 265).

nor for the notary; and there was nothing exacted for sealing-wax, paper, or seal. "For," says Herbert, "whose image and superscription does the seal bear, that it should be bought and sold?" The seal<sup>3</sup> that drew forth this remark, fragile though the substance was on which it was impressed, has come down to us.



It represents the tall, beardless figure of the Archbishop, fully vested, wearing a mitre of

<sup>3</sup> It is here reproduced from Mr. Gough Nichols's translation of Erasmus's *Pilgrimages*, 1849. The seal was also published in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, part i. vol. x. April, 1854.

unusual form, and having in his left hand a short pastoral staff, the crook turned inwards, and corresponding precisely with the description of that pastoral staff, of pear-wood, with the head of black horn, which was preserved for centuries among the relics at Canterbury. The inscription simply announced that it was "the seal of Thomas, by the grace of God Archbishop of Canterbury."

A few words must yet be added to this personal sketch on the subject of his mortifications. His self-denial with regard to food and sleep has already been mentioned, and a hair-shirt has been alluded to; but nothing has yet been said of the unusual severity of this instrument of penance. It was not merely a hair-shirt, but drawers of the same rough material, that he wore; and this mortification was increased in a very singular degree, if there is no exaggeration in the accounts which tell us that at the time of his martyrdom it was found to be infested with vermin. It is not that it was never changed, for two others were amongst his effects when they were ransacked by his murderers; and we are further told that its existence was during his lifetime known only to Robert of Merton, his confessor, and to "Brun son vaslet," whose business it was to wash and prepare it for him.

## CHAPTER IX.

### GILBERT FOLIOT.

1162.

The Archbishop resigns the chancellorship and the archdeaconry—reclaims alienated Church lands—William de Ros—the Earl of Clare—Tunbridge, Saltwood, and Hythe—the King returns to England—meeting of King and Archbishop—Christmas in London—translation of Gilbert Foliot to London—Foliot's antecedents—purpose of his translation.

A REPORT of the great change in St. Thomas's manner of life, misrepresented and distorted by the malice of the courtiers, reached the ears of King Henry in Normandy, and doubtless caused him some uneasiness. This feeling was increased by a message<sup>†</sup> which he soon received from St. Thomas, resigning into his hands the Great Seal and the office of Chancellor. By this the King was much mortified, probably because he regarded it as a proof that the Saint was laying aside whatever might be an obstacle to his freedom of action, in case any dissension should arise between the Crown and the Church. As a mark of his displeasure, he urged upon him the immediate resignation of the archdeaconry of Canterbury, and his delay in complying with the injunction the King never entirely forgave. It is to be presumed that the fear lest such a man

<sup>†</sup> *Diceto*, p. 534.

as Geoffrey Ridel should be a thorn in his side, was the cause of his retaining that high dignity for awhile.

At the same time there arose a still graver cause of dissension. The Archbishop had received from the King, according to the explicit statement of Fitzstephen,<sup>2</sup> leave to reclaim all estates of the Church of Canterbury which had been alienated by his predecessors or were occupied by laymen. He entered upon this course, in itself no attractive one, moved by a sense of duty; for he had sworn in his consecration oath to defend the property of his Church, which was, as he well knew, inalienable. In those cases where the injustice was notorious, he took possession, without any judicial process or sentence, of the estates which had been usurped. One of them was a fief with the feudal burden of seven soldiers, which had been taken possession of by William de Ros on the death of Archbishop Theobald. The clearness of the right here exercised is shown by the fact that his judgment was never reversed.

Another instance<sup>3</sup> was that of the Earl of Clare, who was related to most of the noble families of England. The Archbishop claimed his homage in virtue of Tunbridge and its honour, a league around which was called the ban-league or lowy. The Earl offered to pay the homage, if he might leave unmentioned the plea on which

<sup>2</sup> Fitzstephen, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Diceto, p. 536, gives the date as 22nd July, 1163, which would be after the Council of Tours.



it was due; which offer the Archbishop refused. A claim was also made, not only to Saltwood and Hythe,<sup>4</sup> but to the custody of Rochester Castle, the deed of grant of William the Conqueror being produced. Some of the parties who were offended by these proceedings crossed over to the King to complain of the Archbishop, but by no means violently; for they felt that Henry was still the friend of St. Thomas, and they regarded him as still too powerful at Court to be offended or injured with impunity.

The meeting between King Henry and the Archbishop proved that the courtiers had been wise in their caution. A few days before Christmas in the year 1162, that of the consecration, the King returned from his continental dominions, and landed at Southampton. He was met by his son Prince Henry and by St. Thomas. The manner in which the Archbishop was received spoke of all the former affection which had subsisted between them. The Prince and St. Thomas entered together into the room where the King was; on which Henry embraced the Saint with his ancient cordiality, seeming almost to neglect his son in his joy at seeing his old friend. It must be remembered that if the new and edifying life the Saint had adopted caused the King to entertain misgivings, as no doubt it did, it also caused a very general feeling of satisfaction at his elevation, which reflected credit on the King's choice; and thus his vanity was flattered.

<sup>4</sup> Gerv. p. 174.

After a short interview on the first day, the Archbishop left the King, who was wearied with his voyage; but on the day following they began the journey to London, riding together the whole way engrossed in private conversation. St. Thomas spent Christmas in London, as he had not time to return to his own see for the festival; and he celebrated Mass in St. Paul's Cathedral, there being at that time no Bishop of London.

One of the earliest ecclesiastical acts performed after the King's return was the translation of Gilbert Foliot to the vacant see. To the postulation (as it is technically termed) of the Chapter of London, of which Ralph de Diceto, the chronicler, was then Archdeacon, the Pope assented, dating his letter from Paris, the 19th of March;<sup>5</sup> and as the Apostolic mandate was warmly seconded by a letter from the King, and most affectionately and urgently by another from St. Thomas, Gilbert was enthroned in St. Paul's Cathedral on the 28th of April, 1163, a few days only before he left England in the train of his Metropolitan for the Council the Pope had summoned to assemble at Tours on the 19th of May.

Gilbert, however, plays far too important a part in our history for us to miss the opportunity, given us by his promotion to the highest ecclesiastical position he was destined to attain, of saying a few words drawn from his own writings respecting his previous life. It will then be seen that it was quite natural for St. Thomas to congratulate himself, as he does, on the nearness of

<sup>5</sup> Diceto, p. 534.

the new Bishop of London to Canterbury, and that he was quite justified in hoping to find in him a powerful assistant in the Church's cause.

Gilbert Foliot is commonly called a Cistercian monk, whereas he was truly of the Order of Clugny. His first religious promotion was to be Prior of the famous house in which he had made his profession. He was then made Prior of Abbeville. He attended the Abbot of Clugny to the great Second Council of Lateran in 1139, under Pope Innocent II., where Archbishop Theobald was also present. In the same year he was made Abbot of the great Benedictine Abbey of St. Peter at Gloucester. He was now in a position of considerable influence, and his correspondence shows that he was quite conscious of it. Amongst his letters while Abbot of Gloucester, we have one to Pope Celestine II. in behalf of Nigel, Bishop of Ely; another to Pope Lucius II. for Jocelin, Bishop-elect of Sarum; a third to Pope Eugenius III. in behalf of Roger de Pont l'Evêque, though a cleric in the court of Archbishop Theobald; to whom also, in a fourth, he writes for the Bishop of Lincoln; a fifth requests that the Pope would command the Bishop of Salisbury to bless the Abbot of Cernely; in a sixth, he commends the Abbey of Malmesbury to Pope Eugenius; in another, he boasts to the Bishop of Llandaff of the effect of his intercession; and again, he writes to the Pope for the Bishop-elect of Arras. On another occasion, he speaks of the many and important affairs wherewith he had been intrusted by the Pope. In similar terms he writes to the

Empress Matilda and to Archbishop Theobald. In all this, too, his principles were most strictly those of a churchman. The instances in which he asks for the exercise of the spiritual sword are almost too numerous to quote: he maintains inviolate all Papal privileges; he warmly praises the Holy See; and sentences like the following, which is taken from a letter to the Empress Matilda, are of frequent occurrence in his correspondence: "Let not your serenity be disturbed, if we obey the Apostolic mandate, to depart from which we judge to be as a sacrilege. In all things, therefore, in which we can and ought, we are prepared to obey your commands. But if in anything Church authority is offended, we have a full excuse, when that is exacted from us which we ought not to do." His abilities were of a high order, as his correspondence shows; and his talents and leading position were aided by a great reputation for personal austerity and sanctity of life.

It was but natural that such a man should be advanced to the episcopacy. He was consecrated<sup>6</sup> Bishop of Hereford, on the 5th of September, 1148, at St. Omer, by Theobald, during the time when the Archbishop was exiled by King Stephen for having assisted at the Council of Rheims in spite of the King's command to the contrary. We have his letter of thanks to Pope Eugenius for his consecration. He had previously been made by the Pope vicar or administrator of the church of Hereford; and he had given an

<sup>6</sup> Gerv. p. 135.

early example of vigour, by placing it under an interdict on account of the contumacy of the Earl of Hereford. His correspondence in this, his new dignity, is of the same character with that which has gone before. He thus writes to the Pope: "We know, dearest Father in Christ, we know that not to obey the Apostolic commands is to apostatize, and that it is truly like a sacrilege to oppose your will. Far be it from one of the faithful, far be it from a Catholic, far be it especially from a son, who is bound in many ways, and subject to you by the benefits which he has received from your munificence." He writes with great boldness in favour of the freedom and privileges of the Church, and in one instance he threatens to excommunicate an official for summoning the Dean of Hereford before his tribunal. In two cases we find him exercising powers as Papal delegate; and, later, he was made vicar of the diocese of Worcester. One of his last acts as Bishop of Hereford was to petition the Holy See to authorize the translation of the body of St. Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey.

Fitzstephen says that the King's object in asking the Pope to place Gilbert at London was, that he might have his advice against the Archbishop. This does not, however, appear to be a probable motive, and must have been suggested to the historian by the part subsequently taken by Gilbert. If the King foresaw that he would be on his side in the coming struggle, he must have been singularly clear-sighted. At least the

Bishop's antecedents were not such as to lead him to expect it; and, in his letter to him, he mentions only the excellent advice which he had heretofore frequently received from him, "for the dignity of his own person, the state of his kingdom and public business." It is also mentioned in Pope Alexander's letter that the King wished to make him his confessor. St. Thomas urges upon him his new dignity with warmth and affection. "To this we earnestly beg our brother's attention, that the contemplation of our love may be a more affectionate invitation than the necessity of obedience; that thus he who is united to us by sincere love may by neighbourhood be conveniently at hand for our wants and those of the Church of God." And in another letter, apparently after some remonstrance on Gilbert's part, St. Thomas writes to him still more flatteringly, telling him that he had been chosen because of his experience and conduct as Bishop of Hereford, and that he looked for the greatest assistance for the Church of Canterbury from him. He also expresses his regret that he cannot remain in London to receive him with due honour.

His reputation for austerity of life rose with him from dignity to dignity; so that the Pope himself, in the September following this translation, in a letter written from Bourges, after urging upon him to give the King good counsel, begs of him to mitigate his austerities for the sake of his health, which was so valuable to the Church. "We have heard and learnt from many

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trustworthy persons that you weaken and afflict your flesh above what is fitting and expedient, neither eating meat nor drinking wine for your health's sake. It is to be feared that if you take from your frame what is necessary for it, you will succumb under so great weakness; and from your loss, from which God defend us, the Church of God would suffer a great injury, while from your life and conversation she has gained no slight advantage." The new Bishop of London gave an early proof that St. Thomas had not been mistaken in his estimate of his zeal, by writing a very warm letter to Pope Alexander, praying him to preserve the ancient primacy of Canterbury over York, and especially not to suffer the archiepiscopal cross of the latter see to be borne in the province of Canterbury.

## CHAPTER X.

### A LULL BEFORE THE STORM.

1163.

The Saint and the King at Canterbury and Windsor—St. Thomas resigns the guardianship of the Prince—he attends the Council of Tours—canonization of St. Anselm—consecration of Reading Abbey—translation of St. Edward the Confessor—consecration of the Bishops of Worcester and Hereford.

CANTERBURY was now the home of St. Thomas, and since he had resigned the Great Seal, he was no longer obliged to be in attendance on the Court. Whatever uneasy feeling may have remained on the mind of the King in consequence of that resignation, to all external appearance their friendship was still unbroken, and another token of it was given by a visit which Henry paid to St. Thomas at Canterbury previous to his departure from England for the Council of Tours. The King assisted at the Palm Sunday procession; and the historian of Canterbury records<sup>1</sup> that there occurred a storm so violent, that the canopies which were erected, as usual, through the streets to shelter the procession were blown down. The Saint probably returned to London with the King; for he attested the letter,<sup>2</sup> dated

<sup>1</sup> Gerv. p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 24. The copyist of the MS. in the Bodleian, misled, no doubt, by the initial, has substituted the name of Theobald for that of Thomas. Henry was not at Windsor between the death of Richard de Beaumes and that of Theobald.



from Windsor, in which Henry urged Gilbert Foliot to consent to the translation which the Pope had authorized. This must have been early in April, and Easter Sunday in that year—1163—was the 24th of March.

As we are told that the Archbishop took this opportunity to restore the young Prince, now a little more than eight years old, to the King his father, it would seem as if up to this time he had continued to be responsible for him as his tutor and guardian. After spending some days in familiar intercourse with them both, St. Thomas went to Romney on the coast of Kent, which was one of his own villages, to wait for a fair wind. He was detained for a few days, and then crossed over with a splendid retinue to Gravelines on the Flemish coast. Herbert of Bosham was one of his attendants, and records with what enthusiasm he was everywhere received. On landing he was met by Philip Earl of Flanders; and on the next day the nobles of the country came to do him honour and to vie with one another in offering their services. With similar honours he passed through Normandy and the continental dominions of the King of England, being everywhere received as if he were the King himself. He arrived at Tours three days before the opening of the council. As he approached, the whole city went out to meet him, and not the citizens only, but also the dignified ecclesiastics who were assembled from all parts of Christendom. The very Cardinals themselves broke through the Roman etiquette and went out some distance, leaving but

two of their number with the Holy Father. St. Thomas went straight to the palace of the Pope; but the crowd of those who followed him was so great, that his Holiness was obliged to leave the room in which he was for one of the great halls for the reception. He was received with the greatest kindness by the Holy Father; and the interview is the more interesting, as Pope Alexander III. had never before seen him, whom it was his privilege afterwards to canonize. This audience was but short, as the Saint was suffering from the fatigue of his journey. He went with his retinue to the King's castle, which was near the Pope's palace, and had been prepared for his reception.

On the following day the Archbishop was visited by great numbers, both of ecclesiastics of all ranks and countries and also of nobles, but more particularly by all who held office under the King of England, knowing the favour with which he was regarded by that monarch. The Council was attended by 17 Cardinals, 124 Bishops, and 414 Abbots. The English hierarchy was represented more numerously than usual, but three<sup>3</sup> being unable to attend, the Bishops of Winchester, Bath, and Lincoln. The Archbishop of Canterbury with his suffragans sat on the Pope's right hand; and on his left was Roger de Pont l'Evêque, Archbishop of York, with the Bishop of Durham his only suffragan, Carlisle being then vacant. The synod was held in the church of St. Maurice, on the 19th of May, being the octave of Pentecost,

<sup>3</sup> Diceto, p. 535.

and consequently the anniversary of St. Thomas's consecration. The sermon was preached by a prelate who played an important part in the future events of this history, Arnulph Bishop of Lisieux. The most important act of the council was the solemn excommunication of Octavian the Antipope and his adherents. Several of the privileges of the church of Canterbury were renewed at the prayer of St. Thomas.

It is highly significant of the tone of mind of our Saint at this time, and a proof of his quick-sighted anticipations of the struggle that was in store for him, that he should have felt so great a devotion for his holy predecessor St. Anselm. We have already heard of his attachment to the writings of this saintly doctor; but his interest in his memory was no doubt strengthened by the circumstances of his life and conflict with William Rufus, with which St. Thomas had the keenest sympathy. To promote his canonization, therefore, he determined to petition the Pope in the Council of Tours; and with this view he caused John of Salisbury to write the Life of St. Anselm, which is still extant among his works. After his return to England, he received from the Pope apostolic letters,<sup>4</sup> dated Tours, June 9th, in which

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 35. Pope Alexander VI., on the 4th October, 1494, following the example of Pope Innocent (probably VIII.), instituted another commission to report to the Holy See at the request of King Henry VII. (Spelman, *Conc. Orb. Brit.* ii. p. 721). By whom St. Anselm was ultimately canonized is not known. Clement XI., by a decree S.R.C., 8th February, 1720, "at the prayer of King James III.," raised the feast of St. Anselm from a semi-double to double rite for the Universal Church, assigning to him the Mass of a Doctor of the Church.

he says that he had received so many petitions for canonizations (among which was the cause of St. Bernard), that he had deemed it prudent to delay. He now, however, conferred upon St. Thomas special powers to convoke the Bishops and Abbots of the province, and having examined with them the life and miracles of St. Anselm, to proceed by their advice in the canonization as especially delegated by the Holy See. The subsequent troubles prevented any such proceeding.

Not very long after his return from the Council of Tours, the Archbishop consecrated with much pomp and solemnity the well-known abbey of Reading.<sup>5</sup> This noble foundation, which was due

5 A letter recorded by William of Canterbury (*Materials*, i. p. 415) deserves insertion here for the sake of the glimpse it gives of old Marlow bridge. "Brother Anselm of Reading to his beloved lord in Christ, Jeremy, monk of the Holy Trinity at Canterbury, greeting. I am bound by the number of miracles that have taken place to let you know how illustrious the martyr Thomas has become amongst us. Take a story in brief of which I am an eye-witness. By order of my lord William Abbot of Reading I went to Wycombe, having his orders to return to Reading the same day. Having done the business for which I had been sent, I was on my way home, and was crossing the Thames at Marlow by the bridge. I was on foot and my horse was before me, when about half way across the bridge the horse's hind quarters fell through a hole in the bridge, up to his flanks, his hind legs hanging beneath the bridge. The bystanders ran up and tried with poles to lift the horse, but the few who could get at him could not lift him, and the frailness and shape of the bridge would not let more come to my aid. Those who had in vain tried to help me went away, leaving me with the advice that I should enlarge the hole and let the horse fall into the river. But the day was waning, I had my lord's orders, night was at hand, and the way long. So being left alone with God and finding no one to help, in the bitterness of my soul I turned with many sighs to the blessed martyr Thomas, whose relics I bore round my neck, and began to invoke him. A won-

to the munificence of King Henry I., who was there buried, held a place scarcely second to any amongst the glorious religious houses of England; and certainly among the events of its history none are more interesting than its consecration by St. Thomas of Canterbury. It was founded to receive the famous relic of the hand of St. James the Greater, which was brought from Germany by the Empress Matilda, together with the imperial regalia. The precious treasure has survived the destruction of the abbey built to receive it, and is now preserved at Danesfield, near Great Marlow, happily in Catholic hands.<sup>6</sup>

Later in the same year, 1163, our Saint's natural love of magnificence was again instrumental in throwing lustre on the great functions of the Church. Of this we have a more detailed and minute account than of the former. Pope Alexander had not long before canonized an English saint. On the 7th of February, 1161, apostolic letters<sup>7</sup> from Anagni placed St. Edward in the list of holy confessors, whose title he had earned, as it were, as his surname. On the receipt of these letters, Laurence, Abbot of Westminster, caused the appropriate Mass to be sung in honour of the newly canonized saint, as had

derful thing then happened. In a way that I cannot describe, without human help, at my invocation of the holy martyr, the Lord put my horse on his feet and directed my steps, and put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our Lord, Who is above all things blessed for ever."

<sup>6</sup> See *The Month* for February, 1882.

<sup>7</sup> Surius, *De prob. SS. vitis*, Jan. 5; Colon. Agrip. 1618, vol. i. p. 78.

already been done by a Cardinal in the presence of the Pope. He would at once have proceeded to translate the holy relics, if the King, who was then abroad, had not expressed his wish that this ceremony might be delayed until he could himself be present.

On the day being fixed, in the October after the King's return to England, the Abbot made the necessary preparations. He considered it needful that the tomb should be previously opened. Several times he essayed to do this, and each time his heart failed him through reverence for those most august relics of a temple of the Holy Ghost. At length, one morning after Matins, the Abbot, the Prior, and several of the monks who had been specially chosen, remained in the choir when the other religious retired. Having prepared themselves by fasting, they now added prayers, and litanies, and psalms. The Abbot and Prior, taking two of the monks with them, and leaving the rest in prayer before the high altar, went barefoot and vested in albs to the tomb of St. Edward; and when it was opened, they saw the sacred body clad in a robe of cloth of gold, with purple shoes, and wearing a coronet of wrought gold upon his head. A long white beard, slightly curling, rendered his appearance very venerable. When they had recovered from the awe which first struck them, the other monks who had been left before the altar were called; and they found that the body, which had been buried there very little less than a century, had been preserved by God from all corruption. The

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vestments were stained by the stone which they had touched so long, and the dust had fallen in, but this was easily wiped away. They lifted him from where he lay, and wrapped him in a precious silk; and then they laid him in a new wooden chest or shrine as they had found him, save that the Abbot Laurence took the ring from his finger as a precious relic.

The 13th of October was the day chosen for the translation; and this day ultimately became the festival of St. Edward, when, at the instance of Cardinal Howard,<sup>8</sup> the feast was extended by the Ven. Pope Innocent XI. to the Universal Church; for the 5th of January, the day on which St. Edward died, was the vigil of the Epiphany.

Besides the Archbishop of Canterbury, there were present eleven of the suffragans, as well as three Bishops from Normandy. The nobility were headed by eight English earls. When the great personages present had satisfied their devotion by gazing upon the holy treasure, it was carried in solemn procession through the cloisters on the shoulders of the King and nobles, before it was placed by the hands of St. Thomas in the shrine in Westminster Abbey, which still preserves it for us. The Archbishop left amongst the treasures of the church, as an offering to St. Edward, an image of the Blessed Virgin wrought in ivory.

<sup>8</sup> The decree S.R.C. of 29th May, 1679, ordered the feast of St. Edward to be kept by the Universal Church on the 9th October; but it was followed by another decree S.R.C. on 6th April, 1680, assigning the 13th for the festival.

There is but one more event to record in which St. Thomas and King Henry harmoniously co-operated. We have seen how, even in the days of his chancellorship, St. Thomas had used all his influence with the King to restrain him from the crying sin and tyranny of the Norman monarchs, the usurpation of vacant bishoprics. It is not to be supposed that now he was Archbishop, he should feel less warmly on the subject. He therefore urged upon Henry the duty of permitting the vacant sees to be filled by canonically chosen pastors. He was successful; and he had the gratification of consecrating two worthy prelates on the only occasions when he was called upon to perform this important part of his duties as Metropolitan: Roger, the son of the Earl of Gloucester, was made Bishop of Worcester; and Robert de Melun, an Englishman, who had earned his surname by the success with which he had conducted his schools on the Continent, and who had had John of Salisbury and other famous men amongst his disciples, was made Bishop of Hereford in the place of Gilbert Foliot. They were consecrated in Christ Church, Canterbury, after due profession of canonical obedience, Roger<sup>9</sup> on the 26th of August, and Robert de Melun<sup>10</sup> on the 22nd of December. Before the latter date, however, important events had occurred, which influenced in the highest degree the whole future life of our Saint.

<sup>9</sup> Diceto, p. 536. The Tewkesbury Annals say August 23. Gervase, however (p. 182), says that Roger's consecration was after Easter in the following year.

<sup>10</sup> Gerv. p. 176.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FIRST WRONGS.

1163.

Resignation of the chancellorship—resumption of Church lands—sermon before the King—excommunication of William of Eynesford—Clarembald, Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's—the Council of Woodstock and the sheriffs' tax—crimes of Churchmen, Philip of Brois and four others—their punishment.

THE storm did not break altogether without warning. The conduct of the courtiers had resembled the vane, which before a gale shows the variableness of the wind. The large isolated drops, too, had fallen; for no little offence had been taken at some of the actions of the Primate. And yet in these cases St. Thomas was clearly in the right. Surely he is not to be blamed for having "afforded the only instance which has occurred of the chancellorship being voluntarily resigned, either by layman or ecclesiastic."<sup>1</sup> If love of power had been his passion, by retaining the chancellorship, and uniting with it the highest ecclesiastical position in England, he might have held, without a single act of meanness, or the practice of one of the low arts by which men so often rise, the very highest place possible of

<sup>1</sup> Campbell's *Chancellors*, i. p. 97.

attainment by an English subject. But God had other work in store for him; the freedom of the Church was in danger, and he was the champion raised up in its defence. His eyes, so clear-sighted naturally, were enlightened by Divine grace; and as he saw his work before him, he set himself manfully, aye and like a Saint as he was, to perform it.

Another act, or rather chain of actions, besides the resignation of the Great Seal, had irritated the Court. St. Thomas had recalled all grants of Church lands made by his predecessors; and had taken steps to vindicate to the Church all the property that had been still more unjustly, because arbitrarily, taken from her. The ground of this proceeding was, that previous Archbishops had exceeded their powers in granting Church lands, so that their alienation was invalid; for they were the stewards only, and not the lords or owners, of the Church's patrimony, which, having been given to God, could be alienated only by the Pope as the Vicar of Christ. It would be but special pleading to defend St. Thomas in this matter, by saying that he had received the royal license to recall these grants, for he knew that the King, with all the weight of the civil power, could not sanction or validate such alienations of Church property; but still it is right to record that the King was aware of St. Thomas's intentions, and permitted them, and that consequently to make them a ground of quarrel or complaint would be most unjustifiable. Thus far, however, the courtiers alone

have to be accused. The King seems not to have allowed anything that had yet happened to create more than a passing irritation against his former favourite; though he probably felt a strong suspicion that matters would not rest here.

Such an anticipation was well founded. All had not been done that was required to vindicate for the Church what was her own; nor was it likely that a Prelate, who had begun his career as nobly as St. Thomas had done, would rest contented as if his work were finished, when it was, in truth, but scarcely begun. His next acts brought him into direct collision with the King, but in no rash or injudicious manner; for he gave way up to the very confines of duty, and much beyond what we should have expected of him. It seems to have been preceded by another warning. It is related that he preached a very eloquent sermon before the King, the subject of which was the distinction between the spiritual power and the temporal, and the immeasurable superiority and higher order of the one over the other. This was a truth which courtier-bishops had not too often preached, and one, moreover, not likely to be acceptable to a King of the despotic Norman race. Its proclamation by an Archbishop of Canterbury must have recalled to many minds the preaching of St. Anselm; and to some it must have brought a presentiment of the recurrence of that famous contest in which the weak had overcome the strong, in accordance with the promise made to the Roman Church,

“Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; and on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.” ✓

It was a privilege of the Archbishop of Canterbury to present to all benefices in country places belonging to his barons or monks. In the exercise of this power, he conferred the church of Eynesford upon a cleric named Laurence. William of Eynesford, the lord of the manor, expelled Laurence's people; for which St. Thomas excommunicated him. The King immediately wrote to the Archbishop, bidding him absolve him. The answer might have been anticipated, that it was not for a King to decide who should be absolved, any more than who should be excommunicated. The King was so angry at the answer, that he would not see the Archbishop, nor communicate with him, except by messengers; and, for the sake of peace, St. Thomas absolved the offender. The King, who was then at Windsor, said, when he heard of it, “Now he no longer has my favour.” ✓

Another question, in which Henry seems to have taken part against the Archbishop, arose somewhat earlier. Clarembald had been elected Abbot of St. Augustine's at Canterbury; but on his application to be blessed to that dignity by the Primate in the usual manner, he stipulated that it should take place in his own abbey church, and not in the cathedral; and that it should be without any profession of subjection or canonical obedience. St. Thomas refused to perform the ceremony, and Clarembald appealed to Rome. ✓

The King seems to have been inclined to favour the Abbot-elect.<sup>2</sup>

A more important matter, and one which an impetuous monarch would feel far more deeply, occurred soon after. In it St. Thomas appears as the opponent of despotic tyranny, and in a singularly favourable light to modern eyes. A species of tax had sprung up through custom, which, in its origin, seems to have been little else than a kind of black mail, a composition with tyrannical officials. It consisted of two shillings on every hide of land, which was paid to the sheriffs, on the condition that they should defend the contributors from the exactions of their subordinates.<sup>3</sup> At a council held at the royal palace of Woodstock, the King demanded that this tax should for the future be paid into the treasury, by which means a very large revenue would be obtained. None dared to speak but the Archbishop, who firmly but quietly told the King that the tax in question was but a voluntary offering, which his sheriffs should receive as long as they did their duty; but that if they did not

<sup>2</sup> Diceto, p. 534. Thorne, a monk of St. Augustine's, says in his Chronicle of that house (p. 1815) that Clarembald was intruded by the King.

<sup>3</sup> Canon Robertson says that the words of Roger of Pontigny mean that the sheriffs were to defend the nobles against, not "the subordinates of the sheriffs," but "their, the earls' and barons', vassals." No other writer so understands the words, nor is it easy to see what need there was to protect nobles from their own vassals. The contribution was for freedom *a gravaminibus et calumniis*, "from exactions and vexatious trials in the sheriffs' court." *Ne que nul n'en deussent empleidier ne greuer*, is Garnier's expression for the same.

do so, it should not be paid; and by no law could its collection be enforced. The King, in one of his sudden and characteristic fits of anger, exclaimed, "By God's Eyes it shall be enrolled." St. Thomas answered, "By the reverence of those Eyes by which thou hast sworn, my lord the King, not a penny shall be paid from my lands, nor from the rights of the Church." On the constancy of the Archbishop it appeared to depend whether the country and posterity should be illegally burdened or no. "This is the first case," says Dr. Stubbs,<sup>4</sup> "of any opposition to the King's will in the matter of taxation which is recorded in our national history; and it would seem to have been, formally at least, successful." The success was however in all probability only temporary. In 1170 the King held in London what is called the "Inquest of Sheriffs," in which, "by an extraordinary act of authority, he removed all the sheriffs of the kingdom from their offices," and substituted for them officers of the Exchequer. Dr. Stubbs says that this tax "can hardly have been anything else than the Danegeld," and it certainly is very remarkable that from this very year 1163 the Danegeld ceases to appear as a distinct item of account in the Pipe Rolls; but it is surely impossible to identify the two taxes. The one was enrolled until this year, the other the King wanted then to enrol, and was prevented from so doing by the courageous opposition of St. Thomas. Of this tax paid to the sheriffs we know of nothing beyond the information we re-

see Stubbs  
v. i. p. 510

<sup>4</sup> *Constitutional History*, vol. i. p. 463.

ceive from our Saint's biographers; but whatever it was, we may be sure that the collision on the subject would not help to close the growing breach between the Archbishop and the King.

The personal hostility which King Henry was now beginning to entertain against St. Thomas, soon found vent in an attack upon the liberties of the clergy. This was a part of the King's policy of self-aggrandisement, in which he had been restrained by the Saint whilst he exercised an influence over him.

The most important of the cases of ecclesiastical trials for crimes, of which Henry made use in his attack on that provision of the common law of Christendom that enacted the immunity of the clergy from secular jurisdiction, was the case of Philip of Brois, of which we have the accounts of five writers. He was a canon of Bedford, who had been accused of the murder of a soldier; and having been canonically tried in the diocesan court of Lincoln, had been acquitted. Simon Fitzpeter, one of the King's itinerant justices at Dunstable, attempted to bring him to account before his own court; on which Philip, losing his temper, insulted the justice. Simon forthwith went to London, and laid the case before Henry, who fell into one of his usual fits of rage, and swore his favourite oath, that he would hold every insult to his officer as offered to himself. The King ordered the trial to be held; but St. Thomas, who was present, resisting the summons of a cleric before a lay court, offered to try him at Canterbury; and

the King, most reluctantly consenting, deputed several bishops and barons as the Archbishop's assessors. Philip pleaded that he had already been tried and acquitted of the graver offence; but he acknowledged the insults to the justice. The court held the first plea good; and for the minor offence inflicted the very severe sentence of forfeiture of the revenues of his stall for two years to the treasury, and that he should make satisfaction in the ordinary humiliating manner to the insulted magistrate. The King complained of the sentence; and when the Bishops had declared that they had punished Philip above his deserts for the sake of peace and the King's honour, he exclaimed, with his usual temper, "By God's Eyes, *Par les Oilz Deu,*" as his Norman oath ran, "you shall swear that you have not spared him because he was a cleric." They were ready to take the oath required; but the King proceeded further by summoning the Council of Westminster.

Unhappily this was not the only case in which the scandalous conduct of some members of the clergy gave the King a pretext for his attack upon the Church. Fitzstephen mentions two more. One was a cleric of Worcestershire, who was accused of having violated a young lady, and murdered her father. St. Thomas caused his Bishop to keep him in custody, lest he should fall into the hands of the King's justices. The sentence upon this prisoner is not recorded; we are not even told whether he was ultimately found guilty. The punishment inflicted upon the



✓ other cleric is very terrible. He had stolen a silver chalice from one of the Archbishop's churches in London, St. Mary *in foro* (i.e. in Cheap; otherwise called St. Mary *in arcubus*, or Bow Church). The King wanted him to be tried by the secular power; but St. Thomas degraded him, and, to please the King, he was also branded.

6 This sad catalogue is concluded by one other case. A priest of the diocese of Salisbury was accused of murder; and on his trial before his diocesan, on the accusers failing to prove their case against him, he was put to the ordeal, and being unsuccessful, he was sentenced by the Bishop, on St. Thomas's recommendation, to be degraded, deprived of his benefices, and confined for life in a monastery of strict penance. Herbert, who tells this, also alludes to the sentence of banishment having followed degradation in the case of some other clerical delinquent.

Degradation involves the total loss of every ecclesiastical privilege and immunity, and the degraded cleric becomes as amenable to secular tribunals as any layman. This sentence seems to have been freely inflicted for grave offences, if we may judge by the cases before us. In examining them, to judge how far they justify the assertion frequently made of the corrupt state of the clergy of the time, it must in fairness be remarked, that they are taken from all parts of England, and that they are drawn from an exceedingly numerous body of men; for the clergy of England at that time was a far greater body than the secular and regular clergy of any country

in Europe now. In all we have five cases recorded. In the first we have a priest accused of murder, and insult to a judge; he is acquitted of the first charge, and severely punished for the second. In the second case we have an accusation of rape and murder; but the issue of the trial has not reached us. Sacrilegious theft, in the third case, was punished by degradation and branding. The accusation of murder in the fourth is unsustained by evidence; and the man, who in our time would be acquitted, was subjected to an ordeal, which resulted in a sentence of degradation, deprivation, and imprisonment for life. In the last case we hear only of a sentence of degradation and banishment.

We cannot accuse of laxity a body by some few members of which vice is committed, but only that in which it passes unpunished; and certainly if the cases we have given prove the existence of vice, they prove also the severity of the punishment that followed, even in an excessive degree of rigour. It was not, therefore, because ecclesiastical immunity had become a shelter for criminals that the King was induced to attempt its overthrow; his hatred of it arose because it placed a limit to his despotic power.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE COUNCIL OF WESTMINSTER.

1163.

Proceedings at Westminster—Archdeacons' exactions—punishment of criminal clerks—the royal customs—the clause *saving his order*—castleries resigned—the King leaves London—advice of the Bishop of Lisieux—three Bishops join the King—meeting near Northampton between the King and the Archbishop—the King's embassies to the Pope—expostulations with St. Thomas—he promises to yield—he writes to the Pope about Roger of York and also about the King—the Holy Father encourages him.

HENRY summoned the Bishops to a Council at Westminster, at which Herbert of Bosham says he was present. The King arrived in London<sup>1</sup> on the 1st of October, 1163, and the original object of the Council was to declare the right of the Archbishop of Canterbury to be Primate of all England, notwithstanding the opposition of Roger of York. This subject was, however, from the very beginning thrown into the background. The King was bent on something very different from the support of the Archbishop's honours or rights. The proceedings opened by the King's complaint of the exactions of the Archdeacons, who, he said, made money by people's

<sup>1</sup> "Summa Causæ inter Regem et Thomam" (*Materials*, iv. p. 201).

sins; and he demanded that no Archdeacon should try any one, however guilty, without the knowledge of his royal official. He then changed the subject. "My thoughts," said he, "are thoughts of peace, which is nevertheless much disturbed in my kingdom by the wickedness of the clerics, who commit many robberies and murders. Therefore, my Lord of Canterbury, I demand your consent and that of your brethren, that clerics who are taken in crimes be straightway degraded, and given over to my officers to receive corporal punishment, without any defence from the Church. And I also demand that one of my officials be present at the degradation, to prevent the culprit's escape."

St. Thomas, who was unable to obtain the delay of a day for deliberation, took counsel with his brethren in the episcopacy; and it at once appeared that, in the great contest which was now beginning, none would have the courage to stand by him. They were "not columns but reeds," as the writer we are quoting remarks. They proposed to yield to the King; justifying the double punishment, first in the spiritual court, and then in the secular, on the ground of the higher dignity of the clergy. The Archbishop replied, that it was unjust to condemn a man twice for the same fault, and that the ecclesiastical sentence was in itself adequate. He added, that the liberty of the Church was in danger, for which a Bishop should be prepared to give his life. To this the Bishops answered, "Let the liberty of the Church perish,

lest we perish ourselves. Much must be yielded to the malice of the times." This was an allusion to the German Antipope. The reply aroused St. Thomas's zeal. "~~Who hath bewitched you, O foolish Bishops?~~ Much must be yielded to the malice of the time, I grant; but are we to add sin to sin? It is when the Church is in trouble, and not merely in times of peace, that a Bishop must dare to do his duty. It was not more meritorious for Bishops of old to give their blood for the Church, than it is now to die in defence of her liberty. I declare, God be my witness, that it is not safe for us to leave that form which we have received from our holy fathers. Nor can we expose any one to death, for we are not allowed to take any part in a trial of life and death."

✓ The King soon heard what had passed. Finding that, through St. Thomas's firmness, he could not gain his point, he suddenly advanced a new demand. He required a promise that they would in all things observe his royal customs. After consultation, St. Thomas answered that he and his brethren would do so, *saving their order*. The King, enraged at the condition, put the same question to the other Bishops; and received the same answer from all, except Hilary of Chichester, who, frightened at the King's anger, promised to observe them *in good faith*. This change, which was made on his own authority, gained him nothing; for the King insulted him, and, turning to the Archbishop and Bishops, he declared that they were in a conspiracy against him, and

renewed his demand for an absolute and unconditional promise. St. Thomas pleaded that in his oath of fealty he had sworn to give him "earthly honour, *saving his order*," and that in the term "earthly honour" the royal customs were included; that the condition "saving his order" was universal throughout Christendom, and that he would not depart from it. It was now late at night; and the King left the room without saluting the Bishops, who, after an anxious day, returned to their lodgings. On their departure, Hilary, the Bishop of Chichester, received a severe rebuke from St. Thomas, for having dared to change the phrase they had agreed upon without consulting him or the other Bishops.

Early in the morning the King sent to demand of St. Thomas the restoration of the castles and honours of which he had had charge from the time of his chancellorship, and the Saint at once resigned them. The King left London at a very early hour, without the knowledge of the Bishops, several of whom were thoroughly overpowered with fear of the consequences of his anger.

Arnulph, Bishop of Lisieux, a very clever but a time-serving prelate, had come over into England to obtain a reconciliation with the King, who had borne him some ill-will. Anxious to ingratiate himself and to show his zeal, he proffered his advice in this conjuncture how St. Thomas could best be overcome. His idea was that the Saint's firmness rested on the support of the other Bishops; and he recommended the King to

attempt to win them over first. This task was not very difficult, for some of the most frightened had followed Henry to Gloucester when he left London. The first to join the King's party were, Hilary of Chichester, Roger of York, and Gilbert of London. Hilary was doubtless moved by the pusillanimity of which he had already given proof; the Archbishop of York probably by the unfortunate rivalry which had long existed between the two metropolitan sees, fostered by the personal animosity Roger had ever borne against St. Thomas; but what moved Gilbert of London? Perhaps it was some feeling of disappointed ambition; perhaps it was a fear for his possessions and his power; but whatever caused it, Gilbert's first false step was taken, and henceforward the Bishop became the champion of the world against the Church.

Roger of Pontigny, who had admirable opportunities of hearing of all these occurrences from the mouth of St. Thomas and his companions not long after they happened, gives an account of a curious interview between the King and the Archbishop, which took place subsequent to the Council of Westminster. The King summoned the Saint to meet him at Northampton, intending to see whether he could not by his own influence induce him to give up the obnoxious condition. As the Archbishop was nearing Northampton, the King sent him out word (it was not known with what particular motive) that he was to wait for the King at the spot where he was; for, as both were attended by a numerous suite, Nor-

thampton could not hold them. The Archbishop turned aside into a field, and before long Henry joined him. The prelate took care to be the first to make his salutation. Their horses began to kick and neigh, which prevented their meeting till they had changed them; and then they withdrew apart. The King thus began: "Have not I raised you from a mean station to the height of honour? It seemed but little to me to make you the father of the kingdom, and even to prefer you to myself. How comes it that you have so suddenly forgotten all the proofs of my affection for you, that you are now not only ungrateful, but my opponent in everything?"

"Far be it from me, my lord," was the Saint's reply. "I am not ungrateful for the favours which I received, not from yourself alone, but from God through you; wherefore far be it from me to be ungrateful enough to resist your will, as long as it agrees with the will of God. Your worthiness knows how faithful I have been to you, from whom I look but for an earthly reward; how much more, then, must I do faithful service to Almighty God, from whom I have received what is temporal, and hope for what is eternal! You are my lord, but He is your Lord and mine; and it would be good for neither of us that I should leave His will for yours; for in the awful judgment we shall both be judged as the servants of one Lord, and one will not be able to answer for the other. We must obey our temporal lords, but not against God; for St. Peter says, we must obey God rather than man."



Then said the King: "I do not want you to preach me a sermon just at present. Are you not the son of one of my serfs?" St. Thomas answered, "In truth I am not sprung of royal race; no more was blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, on whom the Lord deigned to confer the keys of Heaven, and the headship of the Universal Church." "It is true," said the King, "but he died for his Lord." The Saint replied, "I too will die for my Lord, when the time comes." Henry retorted, "You trust too much to the ladder you have mounted by." "I trust," he answered, "in the Lord; for cursed is he that putteth his trust in man. I am ready for your honour and good pleasure, saving my order; as of old, so also now. But on the matters relating to your honour and the good of your soul you should have consulted me, whom you have always found faithful and useful in your counsels, and not those who have raised this flame against me, though I have never injured them. You will not deny, I think, that I was faithful to you before I was in Sacred Orders; much more, then, ought you to expect to find me faithful when raised to the priesthood." The King continued to urge that the saving clause should be omitted; and the Saint refusing, they parted.

The active service of Arnulph of Lisieux was by no means confined to the shrewd advice which had already had such serious consequences in the isolation of St. Thomas. Diceto says<sup>2</sup> that, in

<sup>2</sup> Diceto, p. 536.

company with Richard of Ilchester, Archdeacon of Poitiers, he crossed the Channel six times in three months, in different embassies to the Holy See, all of which had for their object to put the demand regarding the royal customs in a favourable light before the Pope and Cardinals.

Meanwhile Hilary of Chichester, at the Archbishop's house at Teynham, and afterwards John Count of Vendôme and Robert de Melun, Bishop-elect of Hereford, at Harrow, had expostulated in vain with St. Thomas. Their advice had more weight when it was backed by the authority of letters, of which Philip, the Cistercian Abbot of l'Aumône,<sup>3</sup> was the bearer. He asserted that he came from Pope Alexander, bringing the recommendation that the Archbishop should yield for the sake of peace. Roger of Pontigny gives as the contents of the Apostolic letters, that they urged great moderation and submission to the King; that the Church was in trouble in the troubles of its head, and that prudence must avert a similar trouble from befalling England. Thus, the Abbot observed, the responsibility now rested with the

3 "Eleemosyna," or l'Aumosne, sometimes called, according to *Gallia Christiana*, "le petit Citeaux," was situated "in silva Leonia," now called le Forêt de Marché Noir, in the diocese of Blois. It was founded about 1121, by Theobald, Count of Champagne. The Abbey of l'Aumône was the mother of many abbeys, and amongst others, of Waverley and Tintern. Philip, when Bishop of Tarentum, had fallen into schism under the Antipope Anacletus; and on being therefore suspended, he became a religious of Clairvaux, in 1139. St. Bernard made him Prior of Clairvaux; and in 1156 he became Abbot of l'Aumône. In 1171 he is mentioned in a charter of Henry, Archbishop of Rheims, as having resigned his abbacy and returned to Clairvaux.

Pope. He also brought letters from the Cardinals, who said that the King had assured them that he sought for submission for the sake of his dignity in the eyes of the kingdom, and not with a view to draw any consequences from it to the detriment of the Church. The Saint, who was then at Harrow, was persuaded by these assurances; and going to Woodstock,<sup>4</sup> where the King was, he promised to omit the phrase that had given so much offence.

The King was somewhat satisfied by this absolute promise, and he behaved a little more graciously towards our Saint; but still not as he used to do. He said that he wished, as the opposition had been public, that the obligation to observe the customs in this form should be accepted in an equally public assembly before the Bishops and peers; and with this view, he summoned the Council of Clarendon, from which the customs or constitutions in dispute ultimately took their name.

During the time occupied by the affairs related in this chapter, that is to say during the closing months of 1163, St. Thomas had been in communication with the Pope on these matters of urgent importance and difficulty. We have first a letter<sup>5</sup> from him to the Holy Father relating to the encroachment of Roger of York, who had ventured to have his cross borne before him in the Province of Canterbury; thus, as St. Thomas says, "opposing cross to cross, signifying that

4 So Roger of Pontigny; Herbert says Oxford.

5 *Materials*, v. p. 44.

Christ is divided." He says that he had admonished Roger fraternally, and had shown him the Pope's prohibition, in vain; and the Archbishop of York had appealed to the Pope, naming St. Luke's day, October 18, for the hearing of the appeal. St. Thomas sent Odo, the Subprior of Christ Church, Canterbury, to represent him in this matter. Gilbert Foliot, as has been already said, wrote a warm letter<sup>6</sup> to the Pope in behalf of his Metropolitan, saying that "all antiquity attested that to Canterbury alone had it been granted to bear the cross," and praying that the Pope would provide by his Apostolic authority that "he of York might not bear it any longer in another's province." By the exclusive privilege of Canterbury, Gilbert must mean that its Archbishop could bear his cross in the Northern Province, and this would doubtless go with a primacy of jurisdiction, such as we have already seen<sup>7</sup> claimed by Canterbury over York. But the Pope had granted to Roger, in the preceding year, 1162, by letters<sup>8</sup> dated from Montpellier, July 13, the right of having the cross borne before him "as former Popes had granted to his predecessors, and as they had enjoyed it by ancient custom," as well as the further privilege of crowning Kings, granted on a similar representation of past usage and concessions. The prohibition St. Thomas speaks of, if it be that which has come down to us,<sup>9</sup> was not a final decision on

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 46. <sup>7</sup> *Supra*, p. 20. <sup>8</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 68. It bears an impossible date in the Cottonian MS. "Lateran, December 29." From Sens in October would seem more probable.

the matter, but Roger was not to bear his cross in the Province of Canterbury, under plea of appeal or any other pretext; for "if he did not refrain for a time, he and his successors would have to refrain from so doing for ever."

Even before the Council of Westminster, St. Thomas wrote to the Pope,<sup>10</sup> not mentioning the King by name, but saying that the injuries inflicted on the Church succeeded one another like wave on wave. "That is stolen from Jesus Christ which He bought with His blood; the secular power has put forth its hand upon the portion of our Lord; so that neither the teaching of the Fathers, nor the enactments of the canons, the very name of which is hated here, are any protection to the clergy, who by special privilege have been exempt from this jurisdiction hitherto." Master Henry, his envoy, will inform his Holiness more fully, and St. Thomas begs the Pope to keep the whole matter secret, as all that he says, or even whispers, in conclave, is carried to the King.

This letter the Pope answered from Sens, on the 26th of October,<sup>11</sup> saying that the full explanation of the Saint's troubles had moved him to the greatest sympathy "with his dearest brother" in his affliction. St. Thomas is to rejoice, as the Apostles did when they left the Council, and to keep his soul in patience, bearing his afflictions as penance for his past sins. The Pope bids him appeal to the Holy See without fear, and commands him to return to Canterbury and to move

<sup>10</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53.

about as little as possible ; and he warns him not to be induced by any fear or misfortune to resign his see. Pope Alexander evidently had the strongest dread of the harm that would befall the Church in England if St. Thomas were to be sent into exile by the King, and when Master Henry proposed that he should be summoned to maintain his cause in person, the Pope answered : "God forbid ; let us die sooner than see him so come forth and leave his Church desolate."<sup>12</sup> What the Pope so dreaded, was rapidly becoming a necessity, as we shall see if we accompany our Saint to Clarendon and Northampton.

<sup>12</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 61.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE COUNCIL OF CLARENDON.

1164.

St. Thomas regrets his promise to yield—expostulations of Bishops, Earls and Templars—the Saint yields and promises to observe the royal customs—the Bishops make the same promise—the Constitutions of Clarendon written—the Saint's objections to some of them—seals asked for and refused—the cross-bearer's reproach—the Saint's repentance—Herbert consoles him—the Saint abstains from Mass and asks absolution of the Pope.

ON the 29th of January,<sup>1</sup> 1164, the Council of Clarendon assembled. Meanwhile doubts had entered the mind of St. Thomas as to the trustworthiness of the assertions of the Abbot of l'Aumône, that the King would not use the promise against the Church if it were unconditionally made; and he determined not to renew it in public. For prudence sake he tried to keep this determination private; but it reached the King's ears, whose rage returned with redoubled violence. It now showed itself in demonstrations worse than verbal threats: armed men thronged the council-chamber, and fear filled every heart

<sup>1</sup> Gervase (p. 176) gives the date as St. Hilary, January 14th; Diceto (p. 536) says it was January 25th. The "recognitio" names the fourth day before the Purification. Wilkins, *Leg. Angl. Sax.* p. 322; *Materials*, v. p. 79.

save his whom they were meant to intimidate. Amongst the Bishops were two who had particular reason to fear the King's anger, Jocelin of Salisbury and Roger of Worcester;<sup>2</sup> the latter, who was a young Bishop and a relative of the King's, is described as having incurred the royal displeasure by the freedom with which he had corrected Henry's excesses. These two prelates came to St. Thomas, and with tears in their eyes implored him to have mercy on them; for their lives depended on his reconciliation with the King. The Saint encouraged them as best he could, but refused to comply.

They were succeeded by two noblemen, Robert Earl of Leicester, and the King's uncle, Reginald Earl of Cornwall, who assured him that the King was prepared to proceed to extremities, and besought him to save their royal master and themselves from the disgrace of such a course. The Saint answered: "It would not be a new nor an unheard-of thing if we did die for the Church, since a countless host of Saints have so taught us by word and example: God's will be done." The threats of the nobles shared the fate of the entreaties of the Bishops.

He was next visited by two Knights of the Temple of great reputation and influence: Richard of Hastings, the Provincial Master of the English Templars, and Hostes of Boulogne. They repre-

<sup>2</sup> Roger of Pontigny (p. 34) has erroneously written "Norwich." William Turbo was Bishop of Norwich from 1151 to 1176. Roger de Melhent, Bishop of Worcester, was grandson to King Henry I., and therefore first cousin to Henry II.



sented to him once more that which had had such weight with him in the mouth of the Abbot of l'Aumône. They assured him that what Henry felt was the disgrace of being worsted in the contest; and they solemnly pledged themselves that the King would not attempt to injure the Church, and that nothing more should be heard of the constitutions.

Moved by their earnest solicitations and protestations, after consulting the other Bishops, and accompanied by them, he went to the King and said,<sup>3</sup> "My lord the King, if the controversy between us had been of my personal rights, then I never would have opposed your will; but your excellency must not be astonished if I am more scrupulous in the cause of God. With a lively hope in your prudence and moderation, I assent to what is required of me, and *in good faith* promise to observe the customs;" and he added the clause "*in the word of truth*," which was accounted equivalent to an oath.<sup>4</sup>

The words were scarcely out of St. Thomas's mouth when the King said with a loud voice: "You have all heard what the Archbishop has promised me on his own part; it now only remains that at his bidding the other Bishops should do the same." "I will," replied the Saint, "that they should satisfy your honour as I have

<sup>3</sup> For the speech attributed to St. Thomas by Gilbert Foliot, see Note C.

<sup>4</sup> Grim, p. 379; Rog. Pont. p. 35; Herb. p. 279. "On the word of a priest" (Alan, p. 323; Gerv. p. 178): Fitzstephen (p. 48) adds, but evidently inaccurately, "*et sigillorum suorum impressione*."

done." On this the other Bishops rose and gave their consent, save only (singularly enough, after the effort he had made to obtain the Saint's submission) Jocelin of Salisbury, who, when the Bishops had resumed their seats, asked the Archbishop whether he ought to promise as they had done, and on receiving the reply that he ought, he did so. The King shook his head at Jocelin and rebuked him, telling him that he was always in opposition to him. In spite of the assurance of the Templars, St. Thomas was in doubt how the matter would end; and the King's conduct showed that he had judged rightly.

Henry now said, "I suppose that every one has heard the promise that the Archbishop and Bishops have made, that the laws and customs of my kingdom may be better kept and observed. In order that for the future there may be no more contention on the subject, let my grandfather Henry's laws be committed to writing." Our Saint observed, that he was one of the youngest present, and could not be supposed to know what they were; besides that, as it was getting late, and the matter was of great importance, it would be better to adjourn until the following day. This was assented to.

On the next day, the constitutions were compiled by Richard de Luci and Jocelin de Bailleul,<sup>5</sup> which have given so sad a notoriety to the Council of Clarendon. They were read aloud; and St. Thomas, after consulting Herbert and his other divines, made the following objections

<sup>5</sup> See *Materials*, v. p. 388.

to them. The first provides that all causes of Church advowsons and presentations, whether between laymen or clerics, be tried in the King's Court. The Saint's objection to this was two-fold: first, that by it clerics would be drawn before a civil tribunal; and secondly, that the subject matter was purely spiritual and ecclesiastical.

The third constitution declares, that clerics, when summoned by the King's justice, shall appear in his Court on any accusation; and when found guilty, that the Church should not protect them. St. Thomas's remark was: "By this wicked canon, clerics are brought before a secular judgment-seat both in criminal and civil matters. Christ is judged anew before Pilate."

The next constitution was, that no Archbishop, Bishop, or other person, should leave the kingdom without the King's license. St. Thomas objected that this would put a stop to pilgrimages to the holy places, and render the kingdom but a spacious prison. Besides, supposing the Pope to summon a Council, and the King of England to be in opposition to him, and to forbid prelates attending, as they must obey God rather than men, must they not obey Christ's Vicar in spite of the prohibition? "It was but proper, he added, "to apply for the King's licence before their departure; but to bind yourself by an oath not to leave the country without licence was irreligious and wrong."

The seventh constitution says, that no one who holds in chief of the crown, nor any of the

royal household, can be excommunicated, nor their lands placed under an interdict, without the King's leave. By this decree the Saint declared that the Church was simply degraded, and the power was taken from her, which she received from God, of binding and loosing even Kings themselves.

The eighth constitution ran thus: Appeals, if any arise, are to be taken from the Archdeacon to the Bishop, and thence to the Archbishop. And if the Archbishop do not show justice, in the last instance they are to be brought to the King, by whose order the suit is to be ended in the Archbishop's Court, and the cause can proceed no further without the King's leave. The Saint replied, without hesitation, that an Archbishop who should consent to this would be guilty of perjury, for when he received the pallium he took an express oath not to hinder appeals to the Pope; adding that it would be a sad day when the refuge of the oppressed was taken from them, and they were not able to have free recourse to the Mother of all Churches, the Church of Rome.

The twelfth constitution began as follows: When archbishoprics, bishoprics, abbeys, or priories, in the King's dominions fall vacant, they must be left in his hands, that he may receive all their revenues. The Saint made answer, that the treasury was not the place for the property of the poor; and that although this practice had certainly sometimes prevailed, yet that the Church must always expostulate and resist as

far as lay in her power, but never give her consent.

The same constitution continued : When the time is come to consult for an appointment to a church, the King shall summon the principal persons of that church, and in the chapel-royal the election shall be held. The Saint was far too attached to liberty not to expostulate against a form of election so novel and so uncanonical, saying, that to sanction such a diversity from the rest of Christendom in his island church would be to start a schism, as well as to overpower by the weight of the King's authority all liberty of election.

✓ The King then demanded that the Archbishop and Bishops should affix their seals to the constitutions ; which was not only to exact the promise to observe the royal customs, which they had already given, but it was requiring them to acknowledge *this interpretation* of what those customs truly were. The Archbishop's answer<sup>6</sup> was prompt : " By the Lord Almighty, during my lifetime seal of mine shall never touch them." On this the King's officials prepared three copies on the same sheet ; and tearing it in the usual way, they gave one copy to St. Thomas, one to the Archbishop of York, and the third they kept for the royal archives. St. Thomas took his copy : from it these extracts were taken ; and it

<sup>6</sup> Rog. Pont. p. 37 ; Grim, p. 383 ; Garnier, fol. \*21, l. 9. Herb. (p. 288) says, that when his seal was demanded, the Archbishop, though much moved and distressed, yet dissembled, fearing to vex the King. He therefore did not positively refuse but begged for delay.

was subsequently placed, as we shall see, in the hands of the Pope.<sup>7</sup>

The Bishop of Poitiers, very shortly after these events, wrote to St. Thomas in terms that show that the conclusion to which we have arrived was that also of his contemporaries, that our Saint, though he had unhappily promised to keep the royal customs, neither signed nor sealed the constitutions of Clarendon. "I give God endless thanks," he writes,<sup>8</sup> "that, as I know for certain from the excellent testimony of others, and now from your own, you never did absolutely promise to observe, as their author boasts, nor did you sign as others did, those detestable and profane customs which have made their appearance in our days."

He turned his back upon the Court at the close of another eventful day, and went in the direction of Winchester. Contrary to his usual habit, he rode alone, apart from his suite, in deep meditation. As they rode on, his attendants began to talk in a low voice amongst themselves on the events of the day. Some said that what the Saint had done was necessary on account of the grave character of the time; others were indignant that the liberties of the Church should be at one man's beck. That promise to keep the royal customs seemed to carry all possible evil consequences with it, and the refusal to seal the

<sup>7</sup> Amongst the names of those present at the Council are Richier de l'Egle, the Saint's friend in his boyhood, and Hugh de Moreville, one of his murderers.

<sup>8</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 112.

constitutions of Clarendon was forgotten in regret for the harm done by the promise.<sup>9</sup> The gravity of the fault of having made this promise was always admitted and asserted by St. Thomas and his friends. So John of Salisbury wrote in 1167, "The promise made at Clarendon, to which he was urged by the Bishops, I cannot justify, for it ought not to have been made, but confession atoned for the offence."

Alexander Llewellyn,<sup>10</sup> who carried the archiepiscopal cross, spoke up louder, to the alarm of the rest. "Public power disturbs everything. Iniquity rages against Christ. No one is safe who loves the truth. In the world's judgment they only are wise and venerated who blindly follow the King. This tempest has overthrown the columns of the Church; and during the shepherd's folly, the sheep are scattered before the wolf. Now that the chief has fallen, where will innocence be? who will stand? who will triumph in the battle?" And then, after a pause, "What virtue has he retained, who has betrayed his conscience and his fame?"

"To whom does this apply, my son?" said the Archbishop.

<sup>9</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 235, cf. p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert's character of Alexander Llewellyn is very quaint: "Alexander, called in his own language Cuelin, by surname and nation, 'the Welshman.' A well-educated man, pleasant in alking, and in pleasant speech profuse. Yet all his merit lay not in his mouth, for his hand was as ready as his tongue. With our father and for our father, bidden and unbidden, absent and present, frequently in great perils, he laboured with caution, resolution, and constancy; and, what is very valuable in his nation, his fidelity was equal to his work."

“It applies to you, who have to-day betrayed your conscience and your fame; and in an example left to posterity, which is hateful to God and contrary to justice, you have stretched out your consecrated hands to observe impious customs, and you have joined with wicked ministers of Satan to the overthrow of the liberty of the Church.”

The Saint groaned, and, acknowledging his sin, expressed his horror of it, and declared himself unfit for the altar. “By my sins I have brought the Church of England into slavery, which my predecessors ruled with such prudence in dangers as great as these: and this has rightly come in my time, who was not taken, as they were, from the Church, but from the Court; not from the cloister, nor from any place of religion, nor from the school of the Saviour, but from Cæsar’s service: a proud vain man, a feeder of birds, I have been made the shepherd of the sheep: of old the favourer of actors and the follower of hounds, now the pastor of so many souls. Truly my past life was far from advancing the safety of the Church; and now these are my works. I plainly see that I am deserted of God, and fit only to be cast out of the holy see which I fill.” And here he began to weep and sob, so as to be unable to speak.

Herbert consoled him as best he could, by showing how God often makes even falls conducive to sanctity. He reminded him of St. Peter, who rose by falling. “One thing only remains: if, as you say, you have fallen basely, rise the



more bravely; be cautious, strong, and valiant. And know for a certainty that the Lord will be with you, as he was with David, the King and Prophet, who had been an adulterer and a betrayer; as He was with the Prince of the Apostles, who had apostatized; as He was with the holy and apostolic woman, who had been a sinner; and lastly, as He was with the great Doctor of the Gentiles, who was first above all men a persecutor of the Church. You, too, were a Saul: now, if you desire to be a Paul, the scales have fallen from your eyes, and your Jesus will Himself show you what great things you must bear for His Name."

The Saint was thus somewhat consoled, looking more, as Herbert modestly says, to the love and fidelity of the speaker than to the value of the words. Herbert, looking back, saw Hilary Bishop of Chichester following them. St. Thomas, remembering that he had been the first to give up the clause "saving his order," said to Herbert, "Let him follow, and so let Satan get behind us."

The holy prelate took the earliest opportunity of sending to the Pope at Sens for absolution for his fault. Meanwhile, for about forty days, he abstained from offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar. It may have been even longer, for the Pope's letter<sup>11</sup> is dated April 1, 1164. The Holy Father reminded him of the difference between sins of deliberation and malice and those of ignorance or frailty. "If, then, you have com-

<sup>11</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 88.

mitted anything of which you have now remorse of conscience, we counsel you to confess it, whatever it be, in penance to a discreet and prudent priest: and after this, the merciful Lord, Who looks more to the heart than to the actions, will, with His usual pity, forgive you. And we, trusting in the merits of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, absolve you from that which you have committed, counselling and bidding you that on this account you no more abstain from Mass."

If St. Thomas's own tender conscience had not judged him so hardly, we should certainly have formed a gentler judgment of his fall. For the Constitutions of Clarendon he was in no way responsible, though he evidently accounted himself so when the promise which he had made to observe the customs came to bear this interpretation. Still he had hitherto had nothing to lead him to anticipate so violent an exposition of the royal customs as the sixteen constitutions presented. The King's demands had been comparatively moderate. St. Thomas had resisted the infliction of a civil sentence upon an offending cleric in addition to ecclesiastical degradation, and this he might fairly expect to be included under the royal customs; but what could lead him to anticipate the iniquities of Clarendon? Of assent to them, at least, he is perfectly guiltless.

But he doubtless committed an act of grave imprudence, endangering he knew not how far the liberty of the Church; and for this he did noble expiation. Twice he was persuaded, against

his own better judgment, that the King wanted nothing but a submission in public to leave the victory with him, and that he had no ulterior designs upon the Church. St. Thomas knew King Henry better; and here the imprudence lay. The King had never assured him so: it had been but asserted for him by others who had a point to gain. Nor could St. Thomas throw the blame of his concession on the Holy See. If we may judge by the letters which have come down to us, Pope Alexander, while ever urging on St. Thomas extreme moderation and submission to the King, invariably qualifies it with the important condition, "saving the honour of the ecclesiastical order." It is not probable that the letters of which the Abbot of l'Aumône was the bearer, which were written when the danger was less striking, would be of a different tenour.

A Circular letter from the Pope<sup>12</sup> to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans, written about this time, gives them the clearest directions for their conduct. "You know that you have received the episcopal charge for this purpose, that you may govern the Churches committed to you for the honour of God and the profit and salvation of your subjects, provided that the liberty of those churches be in no ways diminished but be preserved by your zeal and pains. Hence by these apostolic letters we command your fraternity and enjoin in virtue of holy obedience that if the illustrious King of the English exact from you at any time that which shall be

<sup>12</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 84.

against ecclesiastical liberty, you in no way attempt so to do, nor bind yourselves to him in anything, especially against the Roman Church, nor presume to bring in any new form of promise or oath, other than that which bishops have been accustomed to make to their kings. And if you should have already bound yourselves to the King in anything of the kind, know that you must by no means observe what you have promised, but must recall it, and strive to reconcile yourselves to God and the Church for so sinful a promise." It has been supposed that this letter reached the English Bishops before the Council of Clarendon. But in any case the letter shows us that the Abbot of l'Aumône could not possibly have shown to St. Thomas letters from the Pope justifying any concession to the injury of the Church and the Holy See. A general promise to observe the royal customs must necessarily have meant *some* compromise of those ecclesiastical rights, of which the Archbishop was the official guardian, and that compromise was unlawful.

Such would be the judgment of a Catholic on the fall of St. Thomas. The spirit which has generally moved modern historians would, if it were consistent, find still less to blame. Some writers find fault with the Saint for yielding when he did, others for not yielding sooner. On their own principles they are equally inconsistent. The first, in order to place the conduct of the Saint in a really blameworthy light, are obliged to rely upon singularly insufficient evidence, or to distort the facts of history. Thus some, trusting to the

*didn't sign documents in those days.*

mendacious pamphlet afterwards written by Gilbert Foliot, accuse him of a wilful and deliberate perjury; while others assert that he signed, though he afterwards refused to seal, the Constitutions of Clarendon.

A Protestant is more consistent, who blames St. Thomas for refusing his immediate and absolute consent. In his eyes, to make an exception in favour of his order is to falter in his allegiance; and he fondly persuades himself that the Constitutions of Clarendon, identical in spirit, and almost in the letter with the modern statute-law of England, were in reality the ancient customs<sup>13</sup> of the realm: as if it were possible in those days for anything to be the unwritten common law of the land which was contrary to the coronation oath of the Sovereign, or to become law in spite of the protests of the Church, who was herself a component part of the constitution of the country. The King had no claim to exact more than the oath of fealty gave him. Now, besides the assertion of St. Thomas, which we have given above, we have a singular proof from the Constitutions of Clarendon themselves what the terms of the oath were; that is, what the profession of obedience and submission was which the King had a right to exact from a prelate according to the law of the land. The twelfth constitution, after speaking of vacant sees and of elections in the manner we have already quoted, says: "And

<sup>13</sup> "These customs had never been written before, nor had they even existed in the realm of England" (Fitzstephen, p. 47). This is beyond dispute with respect to some of them.

there the elect, before he is consecrated, shall do homage and fealty to our Lord the King, as to his liege lord, of life and limb, and his earthly honour, *saving his order*." Even by those who do not see as Catholics see, St. Thomas should be regarded as the opponent of a tyrannical effort of one estate to triumph over another, and under a specious pretence really to introduce a change in the constitution of the country. ✓

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### NEGOTIATIONS.

1164.

The King asks that the Archbishop of York may be legate—the Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's—Gilbert Foliot's profession—King Louis of France—St. Thomas asks the Pope to confirm the Constitutions of Clarendon.

THE first effort of the King to crush our Saint, after the Council of Clarendon, was to send the Bishop of Lisieux and the Archdeacon of Poitiers to the Pope, to try to gain from him that the Archbishop of York might be legate in England instead of St. Thomas. The Pope replied, that York had ever been subject to Canterbury; "and shall be," he added, "as long as I live." The King hardly listened to their answer,<sup>1</sup> but immediately despatched Geoffrey Ridel, Archdeacon of Canterbury, and John of Oxford to the Pope, to renew the same request. On the refusal of his Holiness, they represented to him, on their knees, the precariousness of the life of St. Thomas, if the King were to be irritated by another repulse; and to save the life of the Saint, which he believed to be in danger, the Pope gave them the letters, dated Sens, Febru-

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 85.

ary 27, 1164, transferring the office of legate<sup>2</sup> to the Archbishop of York; but the messengers were hampered by a promise which they made in the King's name, and which they offered to confirm by an oath, that they would not deliver them without the knowledge and permission of the Pope, or, as another version of the Pope's letter<sup>3</sup> has it, without the consent of St. Thomas. Even with these terms, which rendered the concession absolutely nugatory, the messengers would fain return rather than empty-handed. After showing the letters about for a short time, as if to lead people to believe that he had received power over the Saint, the King, who had never made much of them, returned them to the Pope. The Holy Father, who had much regretted that he had granted the letters at all, received them with such satisfaction as to cause no little astonishment. They reached him on the same day with the news of the death of Octavian, the Antipope,<sup>4</sup> which event gave some hope of peace to the Church. The letters and messages which the King's ambassadors brought were, according to the account of apparently two different witnesses,<sup>5</sup> who were residing at the Court, of the humblest tenour; though the report

<sup>2</sup> Roger of Pontigny (p. 38), Hoveden (Ann. p. 282 b), and apparently some of the other writers, express themselves as if the King himself had been made legate. The letters are, however, very clear.

<sup>3</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Octavian died at Lucca on the Wednesday after Low Sunday, April 20, 1164.

<sup>5</sup> *Materials*, v. pp. 89, 94.



reached the Bishop of Poitiers that they were indignant and abusive. These messengers pretending that it was necessary for them to return immediately, the Cardinals of Naples, Porto, and Pavia, who took a part adverse to St. Thomas, petitioned the Pope with much energy, though quite unsuccessfully, for ampler and more absolute letters, conferring the office of legate upon the Archbishop of York.

In the matter of the cross of the Archbishop of York, a very curious thing happened. The Pope's letters from Montpellier, had conferred on him the privilege, "as his predecessors had enjoyed it;" but in some later copy, or other letters obtained from the Pope by Roger, the words *per totam Angliam*<sup>6</sup> were by an oversight inserted. These were recalled by letters from Sens, dated January 21st.

On another point the decision of the Holy See was more adverse to St. Thomas. We have seen that Clarembald, the Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's, had refused to receive the blessing of the Saint, unless it were in his own church, and without any profession of obedience. To gain this and some other points, which we have yet to mention, St. Thomas sent to the Pope at different times several of his most faithful followers, who afterwards bore exile and hardships with him, as the Bishop of Poitiers, Master Henry, Gunter of Winton, whom Herbert calls

<sup>6</sup> "Ex oblivione potius quam ex industria contigit . . . non enim tenorem priorum literarum memoriter tenebamus" (*Materials*, v. p. 69).

"a simple, faithful little man," Hervey of London, who died on such an embassy, and several others. Many of the Saint's letters to his friends, and their accounts in return to him, are extant, and from one of them we learn how anxious he was upon this and some other points. If the chronological arrangement of these letters were not so open to doubt, it would be far easier to write the history of these events. As it is, it would seem as if the letter of the Pope to Clarembald, dated Montpellier, July 10th, must have been the first answer, and that an entirely favourable one, to the Saint's petition; but that afterwards the Abbot-elect had shown to the Pope the privileges granted by the Holy See to the Abbey of St. Augustine, and that in consequence of them an imperative order was issued to St. Thomas to perform the benediction, with the addition, that if he delayed, the Pope would send for Clarembald, and perform it with his own hands. The moderation of the King's messengers, mentioned above, probably promoted this measure. Eventually Clarembald was deprived by Alexander III.<sup>7</sup> He never received his abbatial benediction, and was ejected by Archbishop Richard, St. Thomas's successor.<sup>8</sup>

There was yet another question which St. Thomas carried for solution to the Pope. It

<sup>7</sup> The Bishops of Exeter and Worcester, and the Abbot of Faversham, who were sent as a commission from the Holy See to examine into the truth of charges of a personal character made against him, report him to have been a fearfully wicked man (Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 268).

Gerv. p. 77.

had been raised at the Council of Tours; but now that he felt that Gilbert Foliot was taking an undutiful part against him, he much wished to exact from him a fresh profession of canonical obedience, which in those days was a matter of considerable moment, being a personal obligation similar in its nature to feudal homage amongst laymen. Gilbert, on his consecration to Hereford, had made his profession to Theobald as his Archbishop; and St. Thomas wished him now to repeat it to him, the plea being his translation to London. The argument which the Bishop of Poitiers used to the Pope was, that if the translation had been to another province, it would absolve from the former profession, and render a second necessary. This was, however, overruled as bad canon law, by which the first profession held until the person making it became subject to another jurisdiction; and consequently a second profession could not be required from Gilbert, unless it were the local custom of that Church to make a personal profession to the Archbishop himself, and not to him and to his successors in his office.<sup>9</sup>

John of Salisbury, who had been banished<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzstephen (p. 46) says, that the King sent not only John of Salisbury, but also John the Treasurer of York, into exile, that St. Thomas might not have their help against him. The latter is as incorrect as his statement that the Bishops sealed the Constitutions of Clarendon; for John the Treasurer of York, who figures so well in his story of the Burgess of Scarborough (p. 44), was made Bishop of Poitiers while the King was friendly with St. Thomas, and he was consecrated by the Pope himself in the Council of Tours (Diceto, *Imag.* p. 536). This good prelate was a friend worthy of St. Thomas.

or the sake of St. Thomas by the King, probably soon after the Council of Clarendon,<sup>11</sup> wrote to the Saint as soon as he reached Paris, telling him that, to his astonishment, he found the affairs of the two councils, which had been then held, widely known, and much exaggerated. On these reports reaching his ears, Louis, the King of France, offered St. Thomas a safe refuge in his country. The Saint answered,<sup>12</sup> that while there was no one on the face of the earth, save the King of England, in whom he had greater trust, or towards whom he entertained more well-merited gratitude, than the King of France, he was bound to refuse the gracious offer; for there was some hope of peace being restored between himself and his Sovereign. "And do you, if it please you," the letter concluded, "if you should happen to speak with him, blame him for ever thinking evil of a man who has served him so much and so faithfully, who has ever loved him with a true love, and upon whom he has conferred so many honours." The efforts to promote peace here spoken of seem to have had a partial or temporary success, for in a subsequent letter<sup>13</sup> to the King of France, St. Thomas tells Louis that there is but one thing

<sup>11</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 95. This letter Mr. Froude dates from Paris, October, 1163, that is, immediately after the Council of Westminster; but the other council mentioned in the letter, which John of Salisbury calls "of Winchester," is evidently Clarendon; and therefore the letter cannot bear date earlier than the beginning of 1164.

<sup>12</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 80.

to disturb the newly restored and perfect peace between himself and the King, and that was a report which annoyed the King, that the Archbishop had denounced him to the Pope and to the King of France as a persecutor and oppressor of the Church; and St. Thomas begs Louis to bear witness that the report was untrue. The fact was, that the King's actions had been abundantly sufficient to give birth to such a report, and St. Thomas had done nothing more than state his case. About this time the Saint wrote to King Henry himself, in a tone quite calculated to attain his end, urging upon him that God would never leave the state of the Church in England unavenged, and promising him every blessing in God's name if he would remedy its evils.

St. Thomas has never received the credit he deserves for the efforts which he made at this time for the restoration of peace. The account just given of his correspondence with King Louis is a proof of his exertions. Another is afforded by the way in which he met the mediation of Rotrou de Beaumont, the Bishop of Evreux. This prelate, who was the son of the Earl of Warwick, and was afterwards raised to the archbishopric of Rouen, had gone to the King at Porchester, who had told him that in one way only could peace be restored, and that was by the Archbishop's gaining from the Pope a confirmation of the customs. St. Thomas, fearing to give the King a fair cause for complaint, actually sent such a request to the

Pope, considering, doubtless, that the liberty of the Church was at least as safe in the Pope's hands as in his own. This may have been the moment of the pacification of which St. Thomas speaks to King Louis. As the Saint had anticipated, the Pope absolutely refused<sup>14</sup> any such confirmation, though the constitutions were represented to him as those to which St. Thomas and other bishops had promised their assent. The letter of the Pope, it must be said, makes no mention of any application from St. Thomas for the approbation of the constitutions, but Edward Grim and William of Canterbury say it explicitly, and the former adds that the Pope's refusal was attributed by the King to the Saint.

Thus was St. Thomas prudently warding off, as far as was in his power, the coming trouble; but in spite of all his efforts it advanced apace upon him. Meanwhile, by the Pope's order, prayer was offered up to God for him in holy Houses, where the odour of St. Bernard's sanctity was yet fresh, Citeaux, Clairvaux, and Pontigny.

<sup>14</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 86. Dated Sens, February 27, 1164.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE COUNCIL OF NORTHAMPTON.

1164.

St. Thomas tries to see the King—his unsuccessful attempt to cross the Channel—he returns to Canterbury—interview with the King—Council summoned at Northampton—John the Marshal and his appeal—St. Thomas reaches Northampton—interview with the King before the Council met—proceedings of the first day—fine for contempt—John the Marshal—accounts of Chancellorship—second day's proceedings—further money demands—the Saint deserted by his retainers—third day spent in consultations.

ON the ultimate failure of negotiations, St. Thomas attempted to obtain a personal interview with the King, and with this intention he went to Woodstock. He was not admitted into the royal presence, and retired towards Canterbury. He then went to Romney,<sup>1</sup> intending to try to cross the sea and visit the Pope, in spite of the illegal, though royal, prohibition of Clarendon. Accompanied by two or three of his personal attendants, he made two attempts in the night to cross the Channel; but without success, either on account of the unfavourable wind, or through the fear of the sailors, who represented it as unfavourable and that a return was necessary, lest they should be punished by the King

<sup>1</sup> So Fitzstephen (p. 49), and Roger (p. 40). "His manor called Aldington" (Alan, p. 325).

for having assisted the Archbishop. The time was not yet come in God's purposes for the shepherd to be separated from his flock. St. Thomas was greatly fatigued by this useless tossing on the sea, and landed much exhausted.

To this time we must probably refer a little story,<sup>2</sup> which is characteristic of the times in the attention it mentions as given to *sortes*, or passages taken from books by hazard. When St. Thomas was seeking safety by flight, early one morning, as he was walking along and meditating on the sadness of his condition, he was met by a certain clerk. "Whither away?" he inquired. "I am going," quoth the scholar, "to school at Canterbury. For I have heard," he continued, "that it pleases our noble Archbishop to maintain poor scholars. I have hopes therefore of finding support under the wings of his fatherly affection and goodness; for I am but a poor orphan, and have no means of supporting myself." "And what book are you reading, my son," asked the Archbishop kindly, "and where is your lesson?" "Cato," answered the scholar, "and here is my lesson—

Esto animo fortis, cum sis damnatus inique.

The Saint took the verse for an omen, as a message of comfort from Almighty God; and telling the clerk that, when he next saw the Archbishop, he should approach him with confidence, and, asking his charity, show the verse for a

<sup>2</sup> It is told by Fordun in his *Scotichronicon*, and quoted by Mr. Brewer in his edition of Giraldus, *De Instructione Principum*, Anglia Christiana Society, 1846.



token, he gave him some money, and they separated with mutual comfort.

On a report of the flight of St. Thomas, a panic seized his followers, who accordingly separated. One of them, bolder than the rest, went to the Archbishop's own room at Canterbury, and there sat after dusk on the following evening pondering in sadness on his master's fortunes. When it was very late, he said to a boy who was with him, "Go and shut the outer door of the hall, that we may sleep more safely." The boy went out with a light, and saw the Archbishop sitting in a corner and alone; on which he ran away in a fright, thinking he had seen a ghost. The clerk would not believe him till he came himself, when he found St. Thomas, who, after some refreshment, summoned a few of the monks of Canterbury, and told them the whole state of the case.

✓ The next morning some of the King's officers arrived to confiscate his property; but when they found that he himself was there, they retired in confusion. The King was greatly relieved when he heard that the attempt to cross the Channel had not succeeded; for he had every reason to fear that the result of a personal interview between St. Thomas and the Pope would be that the country would be placed under an interdict.

The Archbishop once more went to Woodstock, where he was admitted to see the King, who concealed in a great measure his hostility to the Saint, though to St. Thomas's practised eye it

was sufficiently evident. Of the recent attempt to leave England he merely said, as if in joke, that he need not have tried to go, as if the country were not large enough to hold them both. The interview was but short; but the impression was left clearly enough on St. Thomas's mind, and expressed by him to his intimate friends, that the time was now arrived when he must either give way disgracefully, or fight the battle bravely. His resolution had long been taken.

The King summoned a full Council to assemble at Northampton. It would appear that the Archbishop was not summoned in the usual way, as his dignity deserved, but as a culprit, to answer before the King, and even that not personally, for the King would not write to him, but through the Sheriff of Kent. The pretext for this indignity was, that he had not appeared personally before the King when cited to show why he had not done justice in his own Court to John the Marshal. This man had laid a claim before the Archbishop to Mundeham, a portion of the archiepiscopal manor of Pagham.<sup>3</sup> The King had previously made a law, that if in the process of a cause either party felt themselves aggrieved, they could stay all proceedings, and

<sup>3</sup> The result of this appeal to the King was that he alienated Mundeham from the Church, and thus, in 1169, we have in the list of persons excommunicated: "The man, other than the King, who holds the land of Mundeham, of the manor of Pagham, which the King took from the Church of Canterbury on account of John the Marshal" (*Materials*, vi. p. 602).

carry the cause by appeal to a higher court, if the party thus appealing could take oath that justice was not done. Of this power the Marshal availed himself; but in spite of the remonstrances of the judges of the Archbishop's Court, he produced from under his cloak a book of versicles called a tropary,<sup>4</sup> and on that he made his oath. He complained to the King that justice had been refused him on account of his fidelity, and obtained a summons against the Archbishop to appear in the King's Court on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. On the day named the Archbishop did not appear; but he sent four of his knights, bearing his own and the Sheriff's attestations to the invalidity of the appeal. The King was very angry with the Archbishop for not appearing in person, and he would hardly let his knights go free, even on bail. At the instance of the Marshal the Archbishop was peremptorily summoned to Northampton, to answer, as well for the original cause, as for the contempt.

On Tuesday, the 6th of October, 1164, St. Thomas arrived at Northampton. He was met on the way by some of his domestics, who told him that the King had permitted his lodgings to be occupied; on which he despatched word that he would come no further, if this were not rectified. Henry accordingly gave the requisite order. St. Thomas availed himself of the hos-

<sup>4</sup> Tropes were versicles that were sung before the *Introit* (*Ducange*). Canon Robertson was the first to point out the ordinary mistake of calling this "a book of songs."

pitality of the monks of St. Andrew's; which monastery was then in all the glory of its restoration by Simon de St. Liz, the Earl of Northampton and Huntingdon. On the day when he entered, the King was out hawking, so that they did not meet.

On the following morning, the Saint, after his Mass and Hours, went to the castle, where he waited in the antechamber while the King heard Mass. On his entrance St. Thomas rose to meet him, and showed himself ready to receive the customary salutation of a kiss, if the King should offer it; but he did not do so. The Archbishop's first request was for leave to visit the Pope, which was absolutely refused. He then requested that William de Curci might be removed from one of his lodgings; to this the King assented. He then said that he had come to obey the summons in the case of John the Marshal. Henry replied that he was in London in his service in the Exchequer, but that he would soon appear. Nothing further was transacted on that day; but the King bade St. Thomas return to his lodgings, warning him that on the following day the cause would be tried.

On the second day, that is, the Thursday, the Council assembled. All the Bishops of England were there, except Rochester and another who had not yet arrived. There were likewise several bishops of the King's dominions in Normandy, besides the earls and barons. The Archbishop was accused of the contempt of his non-appearance to the King's summons in the

case of the Marshal. The Saint's reply was, that his absence had been caused by illness, and that he had sent his knights to represent him; but it was not listened to, and Henry pressed for judgment. The Council decided that the homage and observance of earthly honour, to which the Archbishop was sworn, had laid upon him the obligation to attend at the royal summons; and for the contempt they sentenced him to the confiscation of all his moveable property to the King's mercy. This was apparently held equivalent to a fine of five hundred pounds of silver, for thus the penalty is stated by other writers. We are told that a difficulty arose in pronouncing judgment between the bishops and the barons, both parties acquiescing in the sentence through fear of the King, yet neither wishing to bear the odium of such a proceeding. The barons pleaded that the spiritual order ought to pronounce a sentence affecting one of themselves; the bishops, on the other hand, replied, that it was altogether a secular judgment; that they were not there as bishops to try their own superior, but that they sat as peers in the Council and the equals of the barons on the trial of a peer. The King began to be angry at such a question being mooted, and the Bishop of Winchester was obliged, though much against his will, to pronounce the sentence. St. Thomas at first thought of resisting it, as emanating from an incompetent tribunal; but he was persuaded not to allow a mere question of money to stand between himself and Henry. He therefore

offered bail for the sum, which was accepted, the Bishops standing his sureties, with the exception of Gilbert Foliot, whose refusal was remarked.

On the conclusion of the question of contempt, the case of John the Marshal was brought forward; but whether it was that the Archbishop's statement was too strong to be answered, or that the King was anxious to enter into the more vexatious questions which he had in store, it is plain that it was not proceeded with. We are told that the Marshal lost within the year his two sons, whom the portion of Church property he aimed at would have gone to enrich, and that he himself soon followed them to the grave, which St. Thomas attributed to the anger of God and St. Anselm.

Another cause was brought forward against the Saint on the same day. The King demanded the restoration of three hundred pounds, which the Archbishop had received from the Castelry of Eye and Berkhamstead. The Saint first pleaded that he had not been summoned to render any such account; but he did not refuse to reply that he had spent the money in question, and very much more, while he was Chancellor, in the repairs of the Tower of London and of the castles in question. The King declared that he had not authorized any such expenditure, and demanded judgment; on which St. Thomas, still determined that money matters should be no pretext against him, offered as bail for the sum the Earl of Gloucester, William of Eynes-

L

ford, and another of his feudal retainers. This closed the day's proceedings.

Friday began with a new demand on the part of the King. He claimed repayment of five hundred marks which had been lent to St. Thomas during the war at Toulouse, and for other five hundred for which he had stood surety for him in a loan from a Jew.<sup>5</sup> To this was added the astounding demand that he should immediately account for the incomes of all vacant bishoprics and abbacies, which had been paid into the Chancery while he was in office. St. Thomas expressed himself as totally unprepared for any such application, which had come upon him without warning, and he begged to be allowed to consult his suffragans and clerics. In this the King acquiesced. The irremediable character of the breach being now, however, apparent to all, his soldiers and military retainers, being anxious to retain the King's favour, deserted our Saint; on which he supplied their place by the poor and needy, and he triumphed much in the exchange.

Saturday was spent in consultation with the Bishops at one time, and Abbots at another. The character of the demand made upon St. Thomas may be estimated from the fact, that it was accounted equivalent to the enormous sum

<sup>5</sup> Herbert (p. 298) represents this day's proceedings as a demand for the repayment of five hundred silver pounds lent by Henry to St. Thomas when Chancellor. He says that, in spite of the danger of giving the King offence by such an act, five men were found willing to stand surety for the Saint, each for one hundred pounds.

of thirty thousand marks. Henry of Blois, the Bishop of Winchester, who had consecrated him, and who always took a lively interest in him, reminded him of the declaration of the Prince in the King's name at his election, that the Church was to receive him free from all secular obligations; and this the venerable Bishop could the better do, as he had himself at that time elicited the declaration. On the King's disallowing it, and declaring that he had been no party to any such liberation, and that he had never ratified it, and St. Thomas being reminded that all his moveable property had already been confiscated, the generous Bishop offered the King two thousand marks on his behalf; but they were refused. After this their consultations were much divided. Those who knew Henry's mind best, declared that he would never be satisfied until St. Thomas resigned the archbishopric. Hilary of Chichester, who was so inclined to favour the King, that St. Thomas, looking back upon these times from his exile, said that he had held amongst them the place of Judas the traitor, is reported to have said, "Oh, that you were only Thomas, and not Archbishop!" Henry, he declared, had said that the kingdom should not contain him as king and Thomas as archbishop, and by a resignation only of his see could peace be restored. Others, however, expressed their hopes that the Church would suffer no such disgrace at his hands; and they were the advisers who knew St. Thomas best.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE FIGHT.

1164.

Sickness of St. Thomas—Tuesday the 13th of October—rumours of violence—appeals to the Holy See—Mass of St. Stephen—the Archbishop's Cross—threats—the Bishops avoid taking part in a sentence—the Barons' message from the King—the Saint's reply—the Bishops' conduct—the Earl of Leicester's speech—St. Thomas's answer—insults—the Saint returns to the Monastery.

SUNDAY was comparatively a day of rest. St. Thomas remained within doors, taking diligent counsel with such as were best able to advise him, and scarcely giving himself time for refreshment. The next day was looked forward to by all as that on which the issue of these exciting proceedings would be seen. But in the middle of the night St. Thomas was taken ill with a violent pain in the side, so that to give him any relief they were obliged to place heated pillows where the pain was. This was a sickness to which the Saint was subject, particularly in times of unusual anxiety; and it was from the natural chilliness of his constitution, and his liability to this *mal de flanc*, that he was accustomed always to wear such a very unusual quantity of clothing. The pain lasted through the greater part of Monday, and prevented him from attending the Council;

and the King, believing the illness to be feigned, sent several nobles to see whether it were true. The Archbishop promised them, that if he were not better the next day, he would be carried to the Court in a litter rather than stay away. However, towards night he recovered.

The following day, Tuesday, the 13th of October, was one of great moments in the life of St. Thomas, in the history of the Church in England, and, it might be added, of the town in which these great events happened; for it is owing to the heroism of St. Thomas on that day shown at Northampton, that the diocese of which that old town is now the see has been placed under his patronage. The town yet bears traces of its ancient devotion to St. Thomas in its hospital and its well, which bear his name; and the very castle in its ruins is revered by a Catholic, not for its olden glories and royal pageantry, but because it was hallowed by the trial of St. Thomas. The blessed Saint cannot but look down with favour on the scene of the struggle, which he called, after St. Paul and the early martyrs, "fighting with beasts;" especially since it has been placed under his protection by the Rome that he loved, by the Holy Apostolic See whose champion he there was.

It was the anniversary of the solemn day<sup>1</sup> when all England had assembled in Westminster Abbey, and St. Thomas had translated the relics of St. Edward the Confessor. The festival of

<sup>1</sup> Alan (p. 330) says that it was the very day on which in previous century, the Normans had entered England.

the 13th of October is the dearer to us from the association of St. Thomas with the great Saint we then venerate, whether we think of him at Westminster doing honour to St. Edward, or at Northampton bearing his witness for the Church and for Christ.

A rumour had been current that in the course of that day violent measures would be taken against his person. Some of the courtiers, who had an affection for him, had warned him of it; and the Bishops, calling upon him very early in the morning, attempted to make use of this fear to induce the Saint to resign. They pointed out the certainty of his condemnation for high treason, on account of his rejection of the royal customs; and they asked what use there was in his archbishopric when he had incurred the hatred of the King. His answer was characteristic: "Brethren, you see how the world opposes me; but I mourn still more that the children of my Mother should fight against me. For even if I were to hold my peace, after ages would tell how you have left me alone in the contest, and how twice in these two days you have judged me, who, sinner though I be, am your Archbishop and Father. And now I gather from what you say, that you are ready to assist in passing, not a civil sentence merely, but also a criminal one, against me; but I command you all, in virtue of your obedience and under peril of your order, not to be present in any judgment against my person. And lest you should do so, I appeal to our Mother the Church of Rome, the

refuge of all the oppressed. If, as the rumour runs, secular hands are laid upon me, I order you, in virtue of obedience, to use ecclesiastical censure in behalf of your Father and Archbishop. Be sure of this, that though the world should roar, the enemy rise up, or the body tremble (for the flesh is weak), yet, by God's help, I will not be base enough to give way, nor to desert the flock intrusted to me."

On this Gilbert Foliot immediately appealed to the Holy See against his precept, that they should use censures in case of violence being shown to him; and the Bishops left, excepting Henry of Winchester and Jocelin of Salisbury, whose sympathies were altogether with the Saint, though they were afraid to show it. When he was left alone, he prepared himself for the contest like a true bishop.

He entered<sup>2</sup> the church, and said the Mass of St. Stephen at the altar of the Protomartyr with very great solemnity and devotion. His tears so blinded him, that more than once he was obliged to break off the prayers unfinished. Two things were particularly noted in this Mass by the King's party: that he had chosen one, the Introit of which began with the words, "For the princes sat and spake against me;" and that he cele-

<sup>2</sup> This was in consequence of the advice a religious, whom he had consulted, had given him (Rog. Pont. p. 45). Herbert (p. 304) suggests that perhaps the reason of his use of the pallium was, that it was the feast of St. Callistus, Pope and Martyr. This is, however, a mistake, for St. Callistus' was the following day, Wednesday the 14th.

brated, though it was not a festival, with his pallium, which was unusual.

The Saint would have gone to the Court vested as he was, and bare-footed, if some of the Templars with whom he was intimate had not persuaded him not to do so. His wish was, he said, to let the Court see who he was, whom it had twice judged. At their urgent entreaty, he laid aside his mitre and pallium; he threw his black cappa as a canon-regular over the sacred vestments, and, looking to the trial before him, he carried concealed about his person the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. On the way to the castle he said to his cross-bearer, Alexander Llewellyn, that he regretted that he had not come as he at first proposed. When he dismounted from his horse, he took his cross into his own hand, and so entered the castle. Gilbert, the Bishop of London, was standing in the gateway at that moment; and Hugh de Nunant, Archdeacon of Lisieux, who was in the Archbishop's train, said to him, "My lord of London, why do you suffer him to carry his cross?" The Bishop answered, "Good man, he always was a fool, and always will be." Robert de Melun, whom he had consecrated Bishop of Hereford, met him as he was entering, and begged to be allowed to act as his cross-bearer; but he would not permit it.

The King was in an inner room. The Archbishop advanced to the council-chamber and took his usual place, still holding his cross. The Bishops surrounded him; Gilbert Foliot being the nearest to him. The attention of all was

riveted upon him, when the Bishop of London said that he looked as if he were prepared to disturb the world. "You carry your cross," he said; "now, if the King were to draw his sword, what hope would there be of peace?" St. Thomas answered, "If it could be so, I should wish always to carry it in my own hands; but I know what I am now doing. I would preserve God's peace for myself and the Church in England. Say, if you like, that if you were here, you would think otherwise. If my Lord the King were now, as you say, to draw his sword, it would be but a bad token of peace." St. Thomas was probably thinking, Fitzstephen tells us, of the troubles of the Council of Clarendon.

The Bishops were summoned to the King, and remained in the inner room for a long time. The Archbishop of York arrived late purposely, that he might not be identified with the King's council, and he had his archiepiscopal cross carried before him; and this he did in virtue of a fresh appeal to the Pope against a prohibition which he had recently received from Rome. They were no sooner assembled than the King bitterly complained of the manner of St. Thomas's entry, saying, that so to bear his cross was to treat him as if he were not a Christian king. The courtiers then took up the accusation, declaring that he had always been vain and proud, and that his present act was an insult not to the King merely, but to the whole kingdom; and the cry that he was perjured and a traitor became so loud, that it impressed with a sense of

imminent danger those who remained in the council-chamber with our Saint: so much so, that on some persons leaving the room where the King was and entering the lower room, St. Thomas and those who were with him immediately made the sign of the Cross.

Herbert of Bosham sat at the Saint's feet, and Fitzstephen was not far from him. They each relate to us a few words that they interchanged with St. Thomas at that trying moment. The latter reports that Herbert bade him in a low voice have his sentence of excommunication ready, if any of them should dare to lay hands upon him. Fitzstephen overheard it, and observed in a little louder tone, "Far be it from him; not so did the Holy Apostles and Martyrs of the Lord, when they were taken; rather, if it should so happen, let him pray for them and forgive them, and possess his soul in patience. If he should suffer for justice sake and for the liberty of the Church, then, by God's grace, his soul would be at rest and his memory in benediction. But if he should pass sentence against them, all men will think that through anger and impatience he had done all he could to avenge himself." John Planeta, who was standing by, and Ralph de Diceto, then Archdeacon of London and afterwards Dean, the well-known historian, were both of them affected to tears.

Herbert's advice was such as we should have expected from his impetuous disposition, as we see it on several occasions when he appears on the scene before us, and in which he resembles

not a little the Saint his master. He tells us that some of the ushers with rods and wands passed into the room where they were, pointing with threatening gestures at the Archbishop and his companions; on which, while the others crossed themselves, St. Thomas stooped down and said to Herbert, who was sitting at his feet, "I am afraid for you; but do not be afraid for yourself, for you shall share my crown." Herbert answered, "We must neither of us fear; for you have raised a noble standard, by which not only the powers of earth but those of the air are overthrown. And," he added, "remember that once you were the standard-bearer of the King of the Angles, and were never overcome: it would indeed be a disgrace to be overcome now when you are the standard-bearer of the King of the Angels."

After a while Fitzstephen attempted to speak to the Saint again, but a king's marshal standing by prevented him; on which, by raising his eyes and moving his lips, he made signs for him to look up at the crucifix he was carrying, and to occupy himself in prayer. St. Thomas understood him; and several years afterwards, when he was an exile in France, he met Fitzstephen, then on his way to the Pope at St. Benedict's on the Loire (Fleury), and told him what a consolation his hint had been to him.

The Bishops were meanwhile, by the King's leave, taking counsel together; for they were not prepared to join with the nobles in passing sentence upon their Archbishop, and yet they did



not see how they could otherwise avoid the King's anger. They at length agreed to propose, if they were permitted to be absent from this judgment, to appeal to the Holy See against the Primate for perjury, and to pledge themselves not to rest until he was deposed. They told Henry how the Archbishop had appealed from their former sentences to Rome. On this the King sent several barons to inquire of the Saint whether he acknowledged this appeal; for he was his liege subject, and was bound by an especial oath at Clarendon to his constitutions, in which it was enacted that Bishops should assist at all judgments except those of blood. They were also to ask whether he would give bail that he would abide by the sentence of the Court regarding the accounts of his chancellorship.

St. Thomas answered thus: "I am bound, my lords, to the King my liege,<sup>3</sup> by homage, fealty, and by oath: but the oath of a priest is ever accompanied by justice and equity. In all devout and due subjection, I obey the King for God's sake in all things saving God's obedience, the Church's dignity, and the honour of a Bishop in my person. I am not bound to give any account of my chancellorship, for I was summoned only for the cause of John the Marshal. I remember and acknowledge that I have received many dignities and offices from the King, in all of which I have served him faithfully on both sides

3 "A *liege* lord was a lord of a free band, and his *lieges* were privileged free men, faithful to him but free from other service." Confused with the Latin *ligatus*, bound (Skeat).

of the Channel; and I rejoice to think that, after spending all my income in his service, I incurred debts for him also. When, by God's permission and the King's favour, I was chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, before my consecration I was delivered over by the King to the Church of Canterbury free from all secular claims; though now in his anger he denies it, yet you and most ecclesiastics in the kingdom know it well. I call upon you, then, to testify to this truth to the King; for it would not be safe, though it is according to law, for me to bring witnesses against him; neither need I do it, for I am not now pleading my cause. If since my consecration I have not made the progress I could have wished, I do not impute it to the King or to any one else, but solely to my own sins. Yet God can give grace to whom and when He wills.

"I can give no sureties for the accounts. All the Bishops and my friends have already been bound; nor ought I to be held to find bail in a cause which has not been judged against me. As to the prohibition I have placed upon the Bishops, I acknowledge that I told them that they had condemned me too severely for a single absence which was not contumacious; and therefore I appealed against them, forbidding them during this appeal to judge me for a secular cause committed before I was Archbishop: and I again appeal; and I place my person and the Church of Canterbury under the protection of God and of my Lord the Pope."

At the close of this dignified address, the nobles

returned to Henry in silence. Others, however, of his partisans were not so respectful. Some said, talking to one another, but loud enough for St. Thomas to hear, "King William, who conquered England, knew how to tame his clerics. He put in prison his own brother Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux, who rebelled against him. He cast Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, into a black dungeon. And Geoffrey Count of Anjou, our King's father, caused Arnulf, Bishop-elect of Sééz, and many of his clerics to be mutilated, because he had counted himself as elected to Sééz without his consent."

When the King received St. Thomas's reply, he urged the Bishops by their fealty to him to take part in the sentence the barons were about to pronounce. They objected the Archbishop's prohibition, which Henry declared had no force against the express provisions of Clarendon. The Bishops urged that they would be placing themselves in the power of the Primate, and that it was therefore for the good of the King and the kingdom that he should acquiesce in their absence. At length he yielded; and they entered the room where the Archbishop was, and took their places near him. Robert of Lincoln was weeping, and some others could hardly restrain their tears.

Whilst the debate was continuing in the inner chamber, Roger Archbishop of York passed through, calling to two of his clerics who were in the council-chamber, Master Robert le Grand and Osbert de Arundel, "Let us go away; for we

ought not to see what will soon be done with my lord of Canterbury." "No," replied Master Robert, "I will not go till I see what God wills in his regard; for if he should strive unto blood for God and His justice, he could not have a finer or better end." The Archbishop of York went away, and Bartholomew Bishop of Exeter fell at St. Thomas's feet. "My father, have pity on yourself, have pity too on us; for the hatred against you is our destruction. The King has just issued a decree, that whoever should take your side should be accounted guilty of high treason." It was further reported, that Jocelin of Salisbury and William of Norwich were to be mutilated for resisting the King; and they also had pleaded with the Archbishop for their own safety. St. Thomas replied to Bartholomew: "Fly hence; for you savour not the things that be of God."

After the entrance of the Bishops, Hilary of Chichester thus addressed St. Thomas: "My Lord Archbishop; saving your grace, we have much to complain of you. You have placed us your Bishops between the hammer and the anvil by this your prohibition; of disobedience to you on the one hand, and of the King's anger on the other. Lately, when we were assembled at Clarendon, his highness urged upon us the observance of his royal dignities; and to prevent mistake, they were shown to us in writing. At length we gave them our assent; you in the first place, and afterwards we, your suffragans, at your command. When our Lord the King bade us swear to them,

and affix our seals, we replied that a priest's word was sufficient, and that we had pledged ourselves to observe his dignities in the word of truth, in good faith, without deceit, and lawfully. The King was therewith content. But now you force us to go against them by forbidding us to be present at a judgment when he requires it of us. From this oppression, and lest you should injure us further, we appeal to the Pope, and under a protest we obey your prohibition."

✓ St. Thomas answered: "I hear what you say, and, by God's help, I will attend the appeal. At Clarendon nothing was granted by me, or by you through me, but saving the honour of the Church. For, as you yourselves say, we added these three clauses, *in good faith, without deceit, and lawfully*, by which the dignities which our churches have by Papal law were secured. Whatever is against the Church or the laws of God cannot be kept *in good faith, and lawfully*; nor has any Christian King a dignity which is the destruction of the Church's liberty, to which he has sworn. Besides, these very royal dignities our Lord the King sent in writing to the Pope for confirmation, by whom they were returned condemned. The Pope then taught us what to do; for we are ready with the Roman Church to receive what he receives, to reject what he rejects. Furthermore, if we fell at Clarendon, for the flesh is weak, we must take courage, and in the strength of the Holy Ghost contend against the ancient enemy, who is ever striving to make him fall who stands, and to prevent him from rising who has fallen. If, then,

*in the word of truth*, we swore to what was unjust, you know that an unlawful oath is not binding."

The Bishops, being exempted from joining in the judgment, sat apart. In a short time the barons appeared, leaving but a very few of their number with the King. St. Thomas was about to rise to them as they entered; but Herbert whispered to him, that to receive them sitting would impress them with a deeper sense of the truth that they were judging their father, and would become him better who was carrying his cross. The Archbishop remained quiet, and gave no sign of fear on their drawing near. The two earls, Robert of Leicester and Reginald of Cornwall, who had so often come to him from Henry, were the foremost.

The Earl of Leicester began: "The King commands you to render up your accounts, as you yesterday promised to do. Otherwise hear your judgment." "Judgment?" said the Archbishop. He then rose, and continued, "Son and earl, hear me first. You know, my son, how intimate I was with our Lord the King, and how faithfully I served him. It therefore pleased him that I should be advanced to be Archbishop of the Church of Canterbury. God knows, I willed it not, for I knew my own weakness: and rather for the love of him than of God I gave way, which to-day is clear enough, when God and the King have both deserted me. Still, in my promotion, when I was elected before Henry, the King's son and heir, who was appointed for that purpose, the

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question was asked, How did they give me to the Church of Canterbury? And the answer was, Free from all worldly ties. I therefore am not bound, nor will I plead, respecting them." "This is different," said the earl, "from what the Bishop of London told the King. But how will you avoid his judgment? You are his subject, and have many castles and possessions in fief and barony." The Archbishop answered: "I have nothing in fief or barony; for whatever kings have given to the Church, they have given as a free alms; and the King himself in his privileges has declared and confirmed the same. Wherefore, by the authority and office which God's ordinance and the law of Christendom give me over you, I forbid your passing judgment upon me." The Earl of Leicester replied: "Far be it from me to transgress the command of such an authority to my soul's detriment; I now hold my peace, and as far as I am concerned, I leave you free." He then turned to the Earl of Cornwall, and said to him, "You hear that the Archbishop in God's name has imposed silence upon me; do you, therefore, what remains, and say what the King has ordered." He answered, "I will not venture upon what was not ordered me." The Earl of Leicester then said, "I beseech you, my lord, to wait until your answer is brought to you." "Am I, then, a prisoner?" St. Thomas asked. "No, by St. Lazarus, my lord," was the earl's answer, with his usual oath. The two noblemen were moving away, when St. Thomas added, "Son and earl, yet listen. By as much as the soul is

more worthy than the body, by so much are you bound to obey God and me rather than your earthly King. Neither law nor reason permits children to judge and condemn their father. Wherefore I decline the judgment of the King and yours, or that of any one else; for, under God, I will be judged by the Pope alone, to whom before you all I here appeal, placing the Church of Canterbury, my order, and my dignity, with all thereto belonging, under God's and his protection. And you, my brethren and fellow-Bishops, who have served man rather than God, I summon to the presence of the Pope; and so, guarded by the authority of the Catholic Church and of the Holy See, I go hence."

Some of those who stood by called him perjured and traitor; on which he turned upon them and said, that if it were lawful, and his priestly orders did not forbid it, he would defend himself against them by appeal to arms from such charges. He left the council-chamber, still bearing his cross; and as he passed through the hall, a multitude of people of all sorts collected there insulted him. In the middle of the hall was a quantity of firewood; and he stumbled over a bundle of faggots. Randolph de Broc called out against him, "The traitor is going away;" and he, with several others, threw straws and other trifles after him, raising a clamour as if the four quarters of the city were on fire or invaded by an enemy. The Earl Hamelin, the King's illegitimate brother, called the same things after



him, to which he answered, "If I were a soldier,<sup>3</sup> my own hands should prove you false."

When in the court, he mounted his horse and proceeded to the castle-gate, which they found locked.<sup>4</sup> But one of his servants, by name Peter de Mortorio, saw a bunch of keys hanging up; and the first that was tried proved to be the right one. Outside the gate, when it was opened, they found a great multitude of people; some suffering from the king's evil, who were waiting for the

3 According to William of Canterbury (p. 39), Randolph received for answer, "Your cousin was hanged for his crimes, which has not happened to any of my relations;" and Hamelin was saluted by the titles, "varlet and bastard:" but Garnier (fol. 13, 10) says, "li sainz huem ne dist mot, mais avant s'en ala;" and Grim (p. 399), in like manner, has, "nemini quicquam respondens;" Fitzstephen, who was there, mentions (p. 68) the insults, but no such rejoinder; and Herbert (p. 310) says, "he turned a stern countenance upon those who were reproaching him, and answered, that if his priesthood did not prevent him, and it were allowed, he would defend himself against them in arms from their charges of perjury and treason. And so we departed from the council: the disciple who bears witness of these things saw them, and now writes this. He at that moment was the only follower the Archbishop had, as he bore his cross from the inner room till we reached the hall." We have followed Roger of Pontigny (p. 52), who perfectly agrees with Herbert. This Hamelin Plantagenet Count of Warrenne, after the Saint's martyrdom, had recourse to him *quem vocaverat in vita proditorem*, and was cured of blindness of one eye (Will. Cant. *Mirac.* p. 452). Isabel, the sole daughter of William de Warrenne carried the earldoms of Warrenne in Normandy and of Surrey in England successively to her two husbands, William of Blois, son of King Stephen, and to this Hamelin, son of Geoffrey Count of Anjou, father of King Henry II.

4 Garnier (fol. 13 b, 7) says, the servant's name was Trunchez, and both he and William of Canterbury (p. 40) inform us that the porter was chastising a boy. The absence of the porter they looked upon as providentially saving St. Thomas from imprisonment.

exercise of that healing power which St. Edward the Confessor had bequeathed to his descendants, and others in fear and anxiety lest he should have been killed. They raised a loud cry on seeing him: "Blessed be God, Who has saved His servant from the face of his enemies." Herbert could not find his horse in the crowd, so the Archbishop took him up behind him to the Monastery of St. Andrew. They were accompanied by the poor; and the Saint had some trouble to guide his horse, hold his cross, and give his blessing to the crowds who fell upon their knees as he passed. He called it, as it truly was, a glorious procession; and that evening the poor were admitted in great numbers to dine with him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE FLIGHT.

1164.

Return to St. Andrew's—dinner with the poor—visit of two Bishops—three others sent to the King—preparation for a night in the church—Herbert's private orders—St. Thomas leaves Northampton—rides to Lincoln—by boat to the Hermitage—the Saint's flight made known—the King's letter to King Louis of France—St. Gilbert of Sempringham.

THE cross that had been borne so prominently that day found its resting-place by the altar of our Blessed Lady. The Saint there prayed for some time; and then rising up, he asked whether it were yet time for None. Learning that the hour was past, he sang None and Vespers, and then went to dinner. At the meal it was seen how few of his followers remained. Of a retinue of about forty who had come with him scarcely six were left; but their place was filled by the poor, who had accompanied him rejoicing from the Castle. "What a glorious procession," he said, "has brought us from the face of the troubler. Let the poor of Christ come in and dine with us." Thus not only the refectory but the courts of the monastery were filled. He sat a long time at table, and was very cheerful. William Fitzstephen said, "This has been indeed a sad day." "The last," St. Thomas replied, "will be

sadder." And then, after a while, he added the following saintly exhortation to his followers: "Dwell in silence and in peace. Let no sharp word proceed from your mouth. If any one speak against you, do not answer him; but suffer him to speak evil of you. The superior part is to suffer, the inferior so to act. We are masters of our own ears, as they are of their tongues. The evil is not spoken against me; but against him who, when evil is spoken, recognizes it in himself."

When the King was informed, it was believed by the Bishop of Hereford, as St. Thomas was leaving the castle, that the courtiers were saying and doing things insulting to him, he ordered proclamation to be made through the streets, that no insult should be offered to him, nor any of his followers be in any way interfered with. It does not seem unnatural to suppose that the King was anxious that these insults, though doubtless pleasing to him, as his own conduct towards the Saint sufficiently shows, should not be attributed to himself; for this he knew would be a strong presumptive argument against him in the eyes of the Pope and of all Christendom.

While the Saint was still at table, the leaders amongst the Bishops of the opposition to him and of subserviency to the King, Gilbert of London and Hilary of Chichester, came to him to say that they had found out a conciliatory course. They urged that it was but a money question between him and the King. If, then,

he would leave for a time two of his manors, Otford and Mundeham, in the King's hands as a pledge or surety, they thought that he would not retain them, nor urge his claim for the money, and would restore the Archbishop to favour. The Saint answered, "Heccham, I am told, was once a manor of the Church of Canterbury; and the King now retains possession of it. I have, then, a claim to its restitution; though under these circumstances it is more than I can hope for. Nevertheless, sooner than resign the ancient rights of the Church of Canterbury over even that manor to the King, to put an end to my troubles or to recover his favour, I would undergo any danger, or even death." And so saying, he laid his hand upon his head. Did he already know where his death-wound would be inflicted? The two Bishops went to Henry, and reported to him what the Archbishop had said, and thus increased his anger against the Saint. These false brethren must have known what St. Thomas would answer; and their use of what he had replied proves that their wish for reconciliation was feigned, and that they really strove to urge matters to extremities.

During their meal the book that was read aloud was the Tripartite History on the persecution of Liberius; and when the text happened to be quoted, "When they persecute you in one city, fly to another," St. Thomas raised his eyes, and meeting those of Herbert, his flight was understood between them, though no word was uttered by either. Before he left the table, he

ordered his bed to be carried into the church, and placed behind the high altar; which was done before them all. They sat until nightfall, when, after grace, St. Thomas sent the three Bishops, Roger of Worcester and Robert of Hereford, whom he had consecrated, together with Walter of Rochester, his chaplain, to the King, to request leave to depart on the morrow, and a safe-conduct to enable him to visit the Pope. They found Henry in high spirits, but he refused to give any answer until the following day. This reply was considered to be ominous of danger; and the impression was confirmed by secret messages from some of the King's privy-councillors.

We are told that the Saint had spent one of the former nights in the church in vigil and prayer with his clerics, taking the discipline<sup>1</sup> and genuflecting at the name of each Saint in the Litany. Some of them, thinking that he was about to repeat this pious exercise, asked leave to watch with him. He said: "No, I would not have you troubled." His chamberlain, by name Osbern, was placed to prevent any one coming to that part of the church, his instructions being to say that the Archbishop was fatigued with his day's work and was not to be disturbed; and when the monks came to sing Compline, they did so in a low voice, believing him to be asleep behind the high altar. The Saint took into his confidence two lay-brothers who were in his train, named Robert de Cave and Scailman, and

<sup>1</sup> Facta afflictione: Fitzstephen, p. 69.

a faithful domestic of his own called Roger de Brai,<sup>2</sup> and bade them prepare what was necessary for his departure. Lest suspicion should be excited, he directed them not to take any of his own horses, but to procure others for their use. These men performed their part well; and four good horses were kept in waiting outside the monastery-gate, as if they belonged to strangers who were visiting within.

The Litanies were said, and a genuflection made at each saint's name; and then St. Thomas gave his parting instructions to his faithful Herbert. He was to go to Canterbury; and after collecting what he could of the Archbishop's income, to make the best of his way to St. Omer in Flanders, and await the Saint's arrival at the famous Monastery of St. Bertin; for thither he proposed to go, if capture or death did not prevent him. Herbert mentions with emotion that the Saint gave into his particular charge a book for which he had an affection, for fear lest, when his property was rifled, as he might expect after his departure, it might be lost: showing what he valued most of all the precious and magnificent things by which he was surrounded when in state. Poor Herbert was thus, to his distress, left behind, and separated from his beloved master.

The night was dark and rain was heavily fall-

<sup>2</sup> Garnier (fol. 14 b, 10) calls Roger de Brai "un brun, un prode bachelor." Perhaps he is the same person as "Brun son vaslet" (fol. 46 b, l. 13), who used to wash his hair-shirts for him. Brother Scailman was subsequently imprisoned, but made his escape (*Materials*, vi. p. 77).

ing, so that every one was within doors, and objects could with difficulty be distinguished. Guards had been set, as they had previously ascertained, at all the gates of the town except the north gate, which, as it happened, was the nearest to St. Andrew's; and, availing themselves of the oversight, St. Thomas, with his three companions, quietly passed through the streets of Northampton. His last preparation had been to take off his stole, which he had constantly worn since his consecration; and he took nothing with him except his pallium and his archiepiscopal seal. He wore his usual black cappa, and his hair-shirt next to his skin was his armour. In the course of that night's ride, the cappa became so heavy with the wet, that twice he had a piece cut off to make it lighter. By morning he reached a village on the Lincoln road called Graham (perhaps Grantham), about five-and-twenty miles from Northampton and half way to Lincoln. He here was able to sleep a little; and after this rest he pushed on the remaining distance to Lincoln. He lodged with a fuller of the name of Jacob; and here he changed his dress for that of a lay-brother, and determined to pass by the name of Brother Christian.<sup>2</sup> Two of his companions were Brothers of the Order of the Canons Regular of St. Gilbert of Sempringham, commonly called Gilbertines, which accounts for his taking refuge almost exclusively in their monasteries. Taking boat on the river which passes

<sup>2</sup> So Roger of Pontigny. Grim says that he was called Brother Dermann]



through Lincoln, he reached a solitary place in the midst of the waters called the Hermitage, belonging to the nuns of the Order of Sempringham. This was a distance of some forty miles by water. As the place was one where he was very safe from pursuit, he remained there for three days. The faithful lay-brother was once so overcome by seeing the Archbishop sitting at his solitary meal of a few herbs, that he was obliged to leave him for a while, lest his tears should distress the Saint. Robert de Cave alone had accompanied him, Scailman and Roger having been sent by land from Lincoln to Sempringham; but they rejoined him later.

It is now time that we should return for a few minutes to Northampton, before we follow St. Thomas on his further wanderings. One of his companions, whom he had left behind, and who knew nothing of his intended flight, afterwards told Herbert and others that he had that night a dream in which he heard a voice sing those verses of the Psalm, "Our soul has escaped like a sparrow from the snare of the fowlers; our snare is broken, and we are delivered." The story is worth repeating from the pleasure it affords us to introduce the words of that text.

In the morning, the Bishop of Winchester, unconscious of what had taken place, came to speak with the Saint. On his inquiring of Osbern, the Chamberlain, how the Archbishop was, he received for answer: "He is well; for last night he left us, and is gone we know not where." With a deep sigh, and tears in his

eyes, the venerable Bishop said, "And God's blessing go with him!" When the flight first ✓ came to the King's ears, he was silent through ✓ anger; and at length he said, "We have not yet done with him:" and he then gave special directions that all the ports should be carefully guarded, to prevent his leaving the kingdom. A council was then held; and it was determined that, in order that his flight might seem to have been unnecessary, and only done to irritate the King, all the Archbishop's possessions should be secured unmolested, and none of his officials be removed during the appeal. The Bishops, who had already pledged themselves to Henry to carry on the appeal before the Pope, were ordered to get ready; and the following were selected for the journey: Roger the Archbishop of York, Gilbert Bishop of London, Roger of Worcester, Hilary of Chichester, and Bartholomew of Exeter. To their party were added Richard of Ilchester, John of Oxford, and Guy Rufus, all ecclesiastics; and amongst the laymen, William Earl of Arundel, Hugh of Gondreville, Reginald of St. Valery, and Henry Fitzgerald, a royal favourite. Henry gave them letters to Louis King of France, and to Philip Count of Flanders, begging them not to receive into their kingdoms a traitor, who had fled from his country, Thomas, *the late* Archbishop of Canterbury. ✓

Henry had yet to learn that it did not come within his royal prerogatives to unmake an Archbishop of Canterbury at will. Nothing could be more instructive, or throw more light on the

✓ cause for which St. Thomas died, than this explicit statement that he was a traitor and that he had been tried and found guilty of treason. As far as we are acquainted with the proceedings of the Council of Northampton, no accusation was brought against St. Thomas that could be construed as treasonable in the slightest degree. The only accusation, that did not resolve itself into a mere money claim, was contempt by non-appearance at a royal summons, when John the Marshal appealed from the Archbishop to the King. The treason, and the only treason, in the case was the refusal of St. Thomas to acquiesce in the Constitutions of Clarendon. This was the cause of the anger of the King, who could not bear that any one should stand between him and any claim he might choose to make. St. Thomas was the official guardian of the King's coronation oath; and his sole treason, the punishment of which fell upon him seven years later, was the courage with which he withstood a tyrannical usurpation, and appealed to the Holy See in defence of the rights of the Church.

Our acquaintance with Henry's letter to Louis is due to a French source,<sup>3</sup> for it has not been preserved in any English collection of letters. It will be well to give it in full, as its terms are a perfect justification of the flight of St. Thomas. "To his lord and friend Louis, the illustrious King of France, Henry, King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou,

<sup>3</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 134, taken from *Gallicarum Rerum Scriptores*, Ed. Brial, vol. xvi. 107,

greeting and affection. Know that Thomas, who was Archbishop of Canterbury, has been publicly judged in my Court in a full Council of the barons of my kingdom to be a wicked and perjured traitor against me, and under the manifest name of a traitor has wrongfully departed, as my messengers will more fully tell you. Wherefore I pray you that you do not permit a man infamous for such great crimes and treasons, nor his men, to be in your kingdom. Let not this great enemy of mine, if you please, receive from you or yours any help or counsel; for to your enemies in my kingdom neither I nor my land would give any. Rather, if you please, efficaciously help me to avenge my dishonour on my great enemy, and aid me to seek my honour, as you would wish me, if needs were, to do to you. Witness, Robert Earl of Leicester at Northampton." We may now turn from these angry words to pleasanter thoughts.

It is ever delightful to be able to connect the memories of Saints together; and the following account of St. Gilbert of Sempringham deserves its place in the history of St. Thomas. After the flight of the Archbishop, it soon became bruited abroad that houses of the Gilbertine Order had given him refuge; for it was, as he himself tells St. Gilbert,<sup>4</sup> the religious order that he preferred above all others. St. Gilbert, then in his seventy-third year, was cited before the King's justiciars, and accused of having sent a sum of money to the assistance of St. Thomas in his need. Fear-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 261

ful punishments had been decreed against all who had dared to *abet the traitor*; and St. Gilbert had but a sorry prospect if he were found guilty. The judges, probably moved by the universal respect in which the aged founder of the Order of Sempringham was held, and by the fame of his sanctity, offered him an immediate release from all proceedings, if he would but swear that the accusation was untrue. This he absolutely refused to do; but when he was ultimately released, he voluntarily declared that truly the case was so, but that to have taken the oath required of him, would have been to have created an impression that he thought it wrong to act in the way that had been laid to his charge. This great Saint lived to hear of the martyrdom and canonization of the Archbishop, in whose holy cause he so sympathized; and he went to join him in Heaven, after he had spent a century of holy years on earth.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### EXILE.

1164.

From the Hermitage, by Boston, Haverholme and Chicksand to Easry—the Saint hears Mass in concealment—embarks at Sandwich and lands near Gravelines—adventures—is recognized—goes to Clairmarais—Herbert arrives from Canterbury—the King's party pass—St. Thomas goes to Eldemenstre and to St. Bertin's—interview with Richard de Luci—the Saint escapes from the Count of Flanders by the help of the Bishop of Thérouanne—he reaches Soissons—Louis receives Henry's letter and St. Thomas's envoys.\*

WHEN St. Thomas left the Hermitage, he went to St. Botolf's (Boston), which was ten miles off; and thence by water to Haverolot (Haverholme), a place also belonging to the Canonesses of St. Gilbert. He now directed his course towards Kent; and as he would henceforward be passing amongst people who were likely to be acquainted with his personal appearance, he only travelled by night. He stopped at Chicksand, in Bedfordshire, on his way southwards. This was another house of Gilbertine Canons; and one of them, of the name of Gilbert, he added to his party. This resting-place of our Saint had a celebrity in after times, and the miracles there wrought were a testimony of Whose cause it was for which St. Thomas was a wanderer. At length he

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reached a village belonging to his see, named Eastry, close to Sandwich, and about eight miles from Canterbury. Here he was lodged in the priest's house, from which a little window opened into the church; and here he assisted at Mass without the knowledge of the people or even of the priest who celebrated. A cleric, who had been trusted with the secret, brought the Pax, or kiss of peace, to him from the altar. It would have been affecting to see the devotion with which, from his place of concealment, the Saint gave his episcopal benediction at the end of Mass to the faithful, who were unconscious of his presence.

On All Souls' Day, Monday, the 2nd of November,<sup>1</sup> nearly three weeks after the memorable Tuesday at Northampton, a little before day-break, St. Thomas embarked at Sandwich, on board a small boat which had been prepared for him by the priest who had given him shelter; and two priests undertook the labour of rowing him across the Channel, with a few others who, John of Salisbury says, did more harm than good. The very same day the Bishops and other messengers from the King also embarked. The weather was very stormy, and our Saint must have been in great peril in his open boat; for the ship that carried the Bishops was in such danger

<sup>1</sup> Herbert (p. 326) has here made another mistake in the dates. He says, that St. Thomas crossed on Tuesday, November 2nd, being the fifteenth day from his departure from Northampton. Fitzstephen (p. 70) corroborates Herbert in saying that it was All Souls' Day. This withdraws one from the list of the critical Tuesdays of our Saint's life.

that the Bishop of London had taken off his cappa and cowl through fear of shipwreck. St. Thomas landed towards evening, on the sand at low water, at a part of the coast called Oye<sup>2</sup> in Boulogne, about a league distant from Gravelines, which seaport town they now made for, as best they could. They went on foot; until at length the Saint, who was unaccustomed to the heavy dress and shoes of a lay-brother which he wore, and who was wearied out by the roughness<sup>3</sup> of the passage, lay down on the ground, and declared that he could go no farther unless they carried him or found him something to ride upon. After some seeking, they at length found a boy, whom they begged to go and hire a beast. He went to the nearest village; but remained away so long, that they were much frightened lest he should have given some notice which should betray them. The Saint had, however, fallen several times, and his hands were bleeding, so that they were obliged to await the result. At length the boy returned, leading by a straw halter an ass without a saddle, which they were glad to hire for a piece of silver. They threw a cloak over the animal, and thus St. Thomas rode for about two miles: he then found it easier to walk. In passing through a village, a woman who saw him was much struck

<sup>2</sup> See Note F.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert (p. 325) is not consistent with himself, when, a little later on (p. 330), he says that though the King's envoys in their ship had a rough and dangerous passage, those who crossed with St. Thomas told him that they in their boat had had a calm sea. They must have meant that it was a wonder that in such weather they could have crossed in an open boat at all.



with something unusually noble in the expression of his face; and seeing his fatigue, she ran into her house to find a stick to offer him. Finding nothing at the moment but one which had been used as a spit and on which fish had been hung, and the state of which betrayed the uses to which it had been put, she ran out and offered it to him: and he thanked her for it earnestly with all gratitude. A little further on, a knot of young men were standing together, one of whom had a hawk on his hand. St. Thomas forgot for a moment where he was; and looking at the bird with his old manner, drew forth the exclamation from one of them, "If I am not mistaken, that is the Archbishop of Canterbury!" Brother Scailman promptly answered him, "Did you ever see the Archbishop of Canterbury travelling in that fashion?" The fright, one of his biographers observes, was probably satisfaction enough for the momentary vanity.

At the house where he slept on the Monday night in Gravelines, he sat at the meal with the three Gilbertine brothers in the lowest place, and was called by his companions Brother Christian. The host, however, noticed a practice which we have already recorded of him as Archbishop, that of sending to others portions of what was set before him. From his platter, he gave some food to the children and to the people of the house; which caused the host to look at him narrowly. He could not help noticing his great height, his broad and calm forehead, and particularly his long and beautiful hands. It had already been

rumoured thereabouts that the Archbishop of Canterbury had fled from Northampton; he therefore called his wife, and told her his suspicions. She no sooner had heard it than she ran in; and after looking at him for a while, she went to her husband, smiling and saying, "Certainly, good man, it is he." The good hostess then became very zealous, bringing her nuts and apples and cheese, and placing them before Brother Christian. Poor Brother Christian would gladly have dispensed with these kind attentions; but she was indefatigable.

After supper the host drew near, all smiles. Brother Christian asked him to sit down by him on the bench; but he refused, and sat on the floor at his feet. After a little, he said, "My lord, I give God thanks that you have come under my roof." Brother Christian replied, "Why, who am I? Am I not a poor Brother, and am I not called Christian?" "I know," replied the host, "that, whatever you are called, you are a great man, the Archbishop of Canterbury." St. Thomas no longer concealed himself; but starting early the next day, to keep his host from talking about him and so betraying him, he took him part of the way with them to Clairmarais, a Cistercian monastery near St. Omer. This journey was made on foot, and the roads in winter time were very muddy and slippery. He arrived at Clairmarais about nightfall, and by the computation of the people of the place, he had walked that day about twelve leagues.

The cause of all these precautions was the hostility of the Count of Flanders. The King of England had been a party some years before to a sacrilegious marriage between Matthew Count of Boulogne, the brother of this Philip Count of Flanders, and Mary of Blois, daughter of the late King Stephen, who was Abbess of Romsey. St. Thomas, when he was Chancellor, had opposed this marriage; and the dislike for him which the Count had then conceived was quite reason sufficient to render it necessary for him to remain concealed. And besides, King Henry had sent Count Philip, his kinsman, a letter against St. Thomas couched in the terms that he used in writing to the King of France.

Herbert of Bosham, with some others of the Saint's followers, had obeyed the directions he had given before leaving Northampton; and had now been awaiting him for four or five days at the neighbouring monastery of St. Bertin in the outskirts of the town of St. Omer. The very night of his arrival, Herbert came to Clairmarais to see his master; and his delight at meeting him was tempered by his compassion for the toils and perils he had undergone. St. Thomas recounted to him how he had travelled by night and on foot; how he had put on the habit of a lay-brother, in which he saw him; and all that had befallen him under the name of Brother Christian. On Herbert's showing himself much moved by the change of his master's circumstances, St. Thomas answered: "If we have received good from the hand of the Lord, why

should we not receive evil?" This brought to Herbert's mind the text, "The just man will never be sorrowful, let what may happen to him." Their conversation must have been not without its share of amusement when St. Thomas recounted to his faithful friend his adventure the night before with his host and hostess. Herbert's account of the way in which he had been able to fulfil the commission intrusted to him was very brief. The King's order, issued with an intent to injure the Saint, had been productive of good; for if the proclamation had not been made that his goods and followers were not to be molested, Herbert would not have been able to leave the country or to bring anything with him. As it was, he had succeeded in bringing a few silver vessels and a hundred marks in money; a sufficiently scanty supply for an exile of indefinite duration. St. Thomas was, however, very thankful for this assistance, and hopeful for the future.

✓ The King's party arrived at St. Omer on the same day with the Saint; and as it was publicly known that St. Thomas was expected at the Monastery of Clairmarais, it was thought better that he should not remain there, lest, if his enemies came, they might find in his fallen state matter for exultation. Accordingly, after Matins that very night, he took boat, and was conveyed to a solitary place surrounded by marshland called Eldemenstre,<sup>4</sup> which was venerated as having once been a hermitage of St. Bertin.

<sup>4</sup> See Note F.

Towards morning, as they were going, one of his party said to him, "My lord, you are weary with travelling, and we are coming to most hospitable people, who will rejoice over your escape; do them the favour, on your arrival, of allowing them to break the abstinence." "No," said the Archbishop, "to-day is Wednesday and we must abstain." "But, my lord," the other still urged, "we must not put them to trouble, and perhaps they have no supply of fish." "That is for God to provide," said St. Thomas; and as he said the words, a great fish—it was a bream—leapt into the Saint's lap; which incident made them very merry till they reached their destination.<sup>5</sup> He remained at the hermitage for three days; and on the fourth, at the pressing invitation of Godeschall, the Abbot of St. Bertin's, he took up his abode in that monastery.

Meanwhile apparently Richard de Luci had been separated from the rest of the royal party, and had been sent with the King's letter to the Count of Flanders. On his return he visited the Archbishop, and tried every argument to induce him to return with him to England. Finding his persuasions without effect, he tried threats. St. Thomas stopped him, saying, "You are my man, and ought not to speak to me so." Richard retorted, "I give you back my homage:" to which the Saint said, "You never borrowed it from me."

<sup>5</sup> Alan (p. 336) who tells this story, assigns it to the journey from the hermitage to St. Bertin's, but that could not have been on the Wednesday.

After this St. Thomas sent two abbots to the Count of Flanders, to request a safe-conduct and free passage through his territory. The Count sent word that he would take counsel upon the matter, and added that he had power enough to keep an archbishop within his dominions.<sup>6</sup> Milo, the Bishop of Thérouanne, an Englishman by birth, coming on a visit to St. Thomas, the Saint consulted with him what had better be done on this ominous answer. They purposely protracted their interview until night; and when it was dark the Bishop rose as if to leave, the Archbishop accompanying him to the door with torches. St. Thomas then ordered the lights to be taken away, as if he had a few more words to say in secret to the Bishop; and as soon as the attendants were gone, he mounted a white horse which the Bishop had had prepared, and they rode away together to the Bishop's cathedral city, where they arrived that night. The next day, accompanied by the Bishop of Thérouanne and the Abbot of St. Bertin's, he safely reached Soissons, where he had previously bidden his followers rejoin him. He was thus safe from the Count of Flanders, and within the territory of the King of France.

The remainder of the King's party, on the day after their arrival at St. Omer, carried Henry's

<sup>6</sup> It is strange that Fitzstephen (p. 71) should say that the Count promised him all he desired, and liberally provided him with horses, clothes, and other requisites. The Count of Flanders had certainly received John of Salisbury with promises of help some months before this (*Materials*, v. p. 96).

letter to Louis, whom, after three or four days' travel, they found at the royal castle of Compiègne. On reading the phrase, *Thomas the late Archbishop of Canterbury*, King Louis demanded of them again and again who had deposed him. At length he said, "Truly I am as much a king as the King of England; yet I could not depose the very least of the clerics of my kingdom." St. Thomas had despatched Herbert and another trustworthy person of his suite to follow the King's messengers diligently, travelling always at the distance of a day's journey from them, so that accurate information might be had of all their proceedings. Consequently, on the day after the departure of the King's Bishops, Herbert and his companion reached Compiègne. They were admitted to an immediate audience; and when Louis learnt that they formed part of the Archbishop's household, he kissed them and received them very graciously and kindly. The relation of all that St. Thomas had undergone moved him very much, the more that he had formed a friendship for him when he was Chancellor. Louis then told them the purport of the King of England's letter, and what answer he had given to it. He added, "Before King Henry had so hardly treated so great a friend of his and a person of such station as the Archbishop, he should have remembered the verse, 'Be ye angry and sin not.'" Herbert's companion amused the King by answering, "My lord, perhaps he would have remembered it if he had heard it as often as we do in the canonical

hours." The next morning, before their departure, the King had taken counsel with those about him, and promised the Archbishop security and protection in his kingdom, declaring that it was an ancient glory of the Crown of France to protect and defend exiles, and especially churchmen, from all persecution. Herbert and his companion, much delighted with their perfect success, did not pause to send the Archbishop word of the refuge that was open to him; but, according to their instructions, hastened on after King Henry's messengers; and they reached Sens, where Pope Alexander III. was staying, on the day after their opponents.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE POPE.

1164.

King Louis sympathizes with St. Thomas—the envoys on both sides see the Pope—the public audience of King Henry's ambassadors—they leave Sens, and St. Thomas arrives—he is received by the Pope, and after three weeks spent at Sens, he retires to Pontigny.

THE messengers of the King of England had urged Louis to write to the Holy Father in their favour, trying to persuade him to take part against the Archbishop by some very unworthy motives, as, that he now had in his power the man who in the war of Toulouse had acted with such vigour and effect against him. So far from acquiescing in their request, he called Brother Franco, the Pope's Chamberlain, who was staying with him at Compiègne, and charged him with a message to the Holy Father in favour of St. Thomas. In fact, the sympathy for the cause of the exiled Primate was there so widespread, where King Henry had no power to repress and counteract it, that the English Bishops and other nobles who were on their way to the Pope considered it unsafe to proceed openly; so they put William de Albini, the Earl of Arundel, into the chief place, and all the others rode as if they were

members of his household and train. On the day after their arrival at Sens, Herbert and his companion reached it also; and on that very evening they had an audience of Pope Alexander. They related to the Holy Father, with all devotion and humility, in the Archbishop's name all that he had undergone during and since the Council of Northampton; and the Pope's fatherly and compassionate heart was so moved, that he said with tears, "Your lord is yet alive, you tell me; he can, then, while still in the flesh, claim the privilege of martyrdom." As they were very weary, the Pope soon dismissed them with his apostolic benediction much consoled.

On the following day the Holy Father held a Consistory of Cardinals, to give public audience to the Ambassadors of the King of England. Herbert and his companion were also present. Gilbert Foliot, the Bishop of London, was the first to speak. "Father," he said, "the care of the whole Catholic Church is yours: those who are wise, your prudence directs and strengthens; those who are unwise, your apostolic authority corrects. Your wisdom will never account him to be wise who trusts to his own wisdom, while he overthrows the concord of his brethren, the peace of a kingdom, and the devotion of a king. Not long since a difference arose between the State and the priesthood; the occasion was unimportant, and a little moderation would have checked it all. But my lord of Canterbury, trusting to his own private opinion and neglecting our counsel, has urged matters unnecessarily

far, without considering the malice of the times or the harm that might come of it; and thus he has entangled himself and his brethren. And if we had given our assent, matters would have become worse. But when we withheld it, as we were bound to do, for him to persist was to cast a reproach upon the King, upon ourselves, and, I might say, upon the whole kingdom. And, as if to heap infamy upon us, without any violence having been shown to him or a threat used against him, he fled; even as it is written, 'The wicked man flieth when no man pursueth.'" The Pope interrupted the speaker: "Spare, brother." "Shall I spare him, my lord?" said the Bishop. The Holy Father continued: "Brother, I did not say spare him, but spare thyself." At this rebuke Gilbert was so discomfited as to be unable to proceed.

Hilary of Chichester, who was renowned as a good speaker, then began: "My Lord and Father, your blessedness is ever careful to restore to a state of peace and concord whatever has been wrongfully done to the harm of many, lest one man's immoderate presumption should destroy many, and create a schism in the Catholic Church. To this point his lordship of Canterbury has been inattentive, when he left the mature counsels of others to bring trouble and anxiety upon himself and his followers, the King and his kingdom, the clergy and people. Such a course a man of such authority *ought* never to have followed." In this last sentence Hilary used the word *oportuebat*, and he repeated it in the

next; adding to his error by treating it as a personal verb. "Neither *ought* his followers to have joined with him, if they had been wise." This repetition of his mistake caused a general laugh; and one of the bystanders saying, in allusion to the sound of the word he had used, "You have come to a bad *port*," he suddenly broke off his speech.

The Archbishop of York was more careful. "Father, no one can be better acquainted with my Lord of Canterbury than myself. From the beginning I have known that it was his nature never to leave an opinion which he had once formed. It is therefore easy to believe that his present obstinacy rests on insufficient grounds. The only remedy for this that I can think of is, that your discretion should lay a heavy hand upon him. I will detain your Holiness no longer."

The Bishop of Exeter followed. "Father, it is not necessary for me to say much. This is a cause which can never be terminated in the absence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. We therefore beg that you will send legates to England to hear and adjudge this cause between the Archbishop and the King." After this the Bishops sat in silence.

The Earl of Arundel was standing amongst the soldiers; and when he found that no one else was willing to speak, he asked a hearing. He thus began in his Norman-French: "My lord, we unlearned people know nothing of what the Bishops have said. We must therefore say, as well as we can, why we have been sent. It is not

that we should contend with nor insult any one, especially in the presence of so great a man, to whose authority all the world rightfully bows; but that in your presence, and in that of the whole Roman Church, we might present to you the devotion and love which our Lord the King ever has borne and still bears towards you. By whom, I ask, does he represent it? By the greatest and noblest of his dominions; by archbishops and bishops, by earls and barons: and if he had any greater and nobler than they, he would have sent them to testify his reverence for you and the Holy Roman Church. To this we may add, that when your Holiness was but newly promoted, you experienced his fidelity and devotion in the way in which he placed himself and all he had at your service; and we firmly believe, that in the unity of the Catholic Church over which you rule, one more faithful than he could not be found, nor one more anxious to preserve peace. Nevertheless my Lord the Archbishop of Canterbury is equally perfect in his own degree and order, prudent and discreet in the matters which concern him, but, some people think, too sharp. Now unless there were this dissension between the King and the Archbishop, the State and the priesthood would both rejoice in a good King and an excellent Prelate. This is what we petition, that your Holiness would do all that can be done to remove this dissension, and to restore peace and tranquillity." The earl's moderate speech was very well received, and produced a favourable impression.

The royal ambassadors urged their King's request that St. Thomas might be sent back into England, and that one or two Cardinals might be deputed with full legatine powers to adjudge the whole matter on the spot. Henry felt, and truly, that while the Archbishop was out of his dominions his cause had nothing but its own merits to trust to. His wish to have St. Thomas once more in his power, and the hope that the choice of the Cardinal to fill the office of Legate might fall on some member of the Sacred College who was favourable to himself; or if this were not the case, that bribery and the other thousand arts in which a Court is practised might help forward the result,<sup>1</sup> were motives sufficient to induce him to urge this measure. The Pope represented that the Archbishop himself was not now far off; and that if the King's representatives would but wait for his coming, the cause could be tried by himself in person. The Bishops replied that their instructions were imperative, and that they were bound to depart with their answer in three days' time, without waiting for the Archbishop. The Pope was very unwilling to delegate judges in the matter from whom no appeal should lie to himself; "this," he said, "is my glory, which I

<sup>1</sup> It is said, that an offer was made to the Pope, if he would depose St. Thomas, not only that Peter-pence, which were now diverted into the Treasury, should be paid, but that they should for the future be exacted, and confirmed by the King for ever, from every inhabitant of the country—"from every house from which smoke ascends, in cities, towns, boroughs, and villages"—which would bring in an additional income to the Holy See of a thousand pounds of silver (Fitzstephen, p. 74).

will not give to another." But his position was one of extreme difficulty and delicacy in refusing the King's request. From the time of his own accession to the Chair of St. Peter, an Antipope, upheld by the power of the Emperor, had led many of the children of the Church from their allegiance to himself. Recent events in England showed that the power of King Henry was sufficient to plunge all his extensive dominions into schism, if he should become personally alienated from the Pope; and the Holy See has ever borne with everything that was not in itself sin to avert sin. Some of the ambassadors secretly showed the great danger of such a schism; and some of the Cardinals, amongst whom William of Pavia was prominent, recommended a course conciliatory to the King of England. But these motives and this advice were not sufficiently powerful to induce the Pope to send St. Thomas into the power of his enemies, from whom he had with such difficulty escaped in order that he might lay the Church's cause before the Church's Head; and consequently, when their three days were expired, the King's ambassadors returned without success. Their departure was accelerated by a fear lest the strong feeling against them in the kingdom of France might place themselves or their property in danger.

We left St. Thomas at Soissons, unconscious of the success of Herbert of Bosham's interview with King Louis. The day after, the King himself happened to come to the same place; and learning that St. Thomas was there, he went to

visit him, and showed the most lively compassion and interest in his circumstances. Before Louis left him, he made an offer to supply him with all that he could need ; but the Archbishop said that he was provided for the present, though the time might come when such help would be necessary for him. Learning that he was on his way to the Pope at Sens, he ordered his officials to afford him every assistance.

During the stay of St. Thomas at Soissons many personages of great importance in France, principally ecclesiastics, amongst whom was Henry the Archbishop of Rheims, the brother of King Louis, came to visit him to show their sympathy ; and some of them accompanied him to Sens, so that he travelled through France with a party of more than three hundred horsemen. The Archbishop's numerous suite, travelling on one bank of a river towards Sens, were seen by the King's messengers from the other bank on their return ; and the latter thought it better to send back one of their number, Guy Rufus Dean of Waltham, to return to Sens, and report how St. Thomas was received by the Pope and Cardinals.

The sympathy with the Saint's sufferings which the Holy Father had shown to Herbert, led him to receive St. Thomas with great affection. After spending several days at Sens, the Saint thought it was time for him to explain to the Holy Father how the steps which he had taken had become necessary ; and for this he could choose his own opportunity, for the Pope had left the opening of the subject to his own dis-



cretion. The Pope's salutation to him was, "The Church has two sons, firm columns on which she rests, Thomas of Canterbury and Luke of Gran." It was not in the public Consistory, but in the Pope's own room, on an occasion when the Cardinals were present, that St. Thomas related the whole history of the Constitutions of Clarendon, acknowledging openly his own fall; and he concluded by producing the very copy which he had then received from the King's officials. As the Pope had never seen them before, we must suppose that the purport only of some of them had been sent to him for confirmation at an early period of the dispute. They were now read aloud; and the Pope's sentence upon them was, that while there were some among them that the Church might tolerate, there were others that were of such a character that nothing could save them from condemnation. The Holy Father then spoke with some severity of the Saint's former consent to them; but he praised his wish to bring them in person to the Holy See, of his sincere devotion towards which his recent sufferings were a sufficient pledge.

St. Thomas seems, ever since he spoke at Northampton of the share that the King had had in his election, to have had in view the step which he now took. He took his ring from his finger, and resigned the Archbishopric of Canterbury into the hands of the Pope, expressing his sense of the manner in which the King's declaration of his wishes might have influenced the election; adding, that to have resigned before, when the Bishops urged him to such a course to

gratify the King, would have been an abandonment of the Church's cause. Some of the Cardinals were very anxious that the most should be made of this opportunity of restoring peace to England, and they therefore advised that the resignation of St. Thomas should be accepted; that another, who would please the King better, should succeed him; and that he should be appointed to some other dignified see. But others of the Sacred College felt how truly the cause of the Church was bound up with our Saint, and that if the royal power were permitted to make this inroad upon the Church's liberties, it would be impossible to prevent further aggression. The Holy Father therefore restored his archbishopric to St. Thomas, declaring that his conduct had shown him to be the fittest for the office. Having been now three weeks<sup>2</sup> in the Court of the Pope, it was time for them to choose a refuge; and the holy Cistercian Order furnishing the separation from the world and the constant service of God he required, the Abbey of Pontigny in Burgundy was chosen; and, having been first recommended to the abbot and brethren by the Pope, to their great joy and consolation, he entered the monastery, in which he was to spend the first two years of his exile.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert, p. 357. Grim (p. 404) says a month. The Pope annulled and revoked the sentence passed by the Bishops and barons in the first day at Northampton, of forfeiture of all the Saint's movable goods to the King, as being "both contrary to the form of law, and against ecclesiastical custom, especially as he had no movable goods but those of his Church" (*Materials*, v. p. 178). This document is conjecturally assigned by Jaffé to June of the following year.

## CHAPTER XX.

### PONTIGNY.

1164—1166.

Life of St. Thomas at Pontigny—Abbot Guichard and his hospitality—Roger of Pontigny—sacred studies—the King confiscates the Saint's possessions, and banishes four hundred of his relatives and friends—public prayers for him forbidden—the exiles come to Pontigny—they are provided for by the charity of Christendom—the Saint's austerities—he takes the Cistercian habit—he is made Legate—Abbot Urban sent to King Henry—three letters to the King—Henry's sharp answer, and the Saint's anxiety.

✓ ST. THOMAS began his new life as an exile on the Feast of St. Andrew, 1164. He had chosen the Monastery of Pontigny because its resources were such, that his stay there with his followers would be no burden, and because it had a great reputation for hospitality, a character which those good Cistercians well deserved. Its Abbot Guichard had in the previous month of June been specially recommended to him by his friend the Bishop of Poitiers<sup>1</sup> as "a venerable man of incomparable sanctity," who had undertaken to communicate secretly with the Pope on St. Thomas's affairs. The good Bishop, who had been the Saint's companion of old in Archbishop Theobald's

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 113.

household, did him the good service now, together with Isaac, Abbot of l'Etoile, of recommending him to the prayers of the holy community of Pontigny; and at the same time told him that he might be sure of temporal help from the monastery, which, thanks to the Abbot's good management, could best of all Cistercian houses afford him succour. The promise of his friend was fulfilled in the amplest manner. The good religious were kindness itself to the poor exiles, providing, as one who experienced their hospitality records, meat and other things for their guests, which their own rigid rule prevented them from sharing in themselves. When St. Thomas had spent three or four days there, he entered the chapter-house; and after recounting to them the cause of his Church, he commended it and himself to their prayers. He and his followers lived in a series of monastic cells, near together; and he was waited upon by a monk named Roger, whom he ordained priest, and who afterwards was in all probability the writer of a very interesting biography of the Saint.

The time was now come that St. Thomas had longed for all his life. He often said, that when he was Lord High Chancellor of England he had desired a quiet and retired life, that he might devote himself to sacred studies; and when he became Archbishop of Canterbury, he felt still more the need of that learning, which, except in leisure that he could not then command, he could never acquire. He now studied canon law, under Lombard of Piacenza, that he might the more

successfully prosecute the cause of the Church ; but it was not long before he found from his own experience, what his good friend, John of Salisbury, afterwards wrote to him, that such studies in one of his position had a tendency to check spirituality ; and he therefore studied far more assiduously the great science of dogmatic theology. His readings in the Holy Scripture with Herbert of Bosham were resumed ; and this study acquired such charms for him, that soon, after the Office in choir, he always had some book of Scripture in his hands, the Psalter and the volume of Epistles being his favourites. Though this manner of life was consolatory after the trying scenes he had lately passed through, yet at Pontigny the Saint had to bear crosses of great severity, in addition to the thought of the sad state of his spouse the Church of Canterbury during this his separation from her.

The Pope had sent a messenger to King Henry to accompany the Bishops and others on their return ; and they found him on Christmas Eve at Marlborough. He was so angry that the Holy Father had not consented to his request, that St. Thomas should be sent back into England, to be there tried by legates delegated by the Pope with plenary powers, that by a public decree he confiscated all the possessions of the Archbishop and Church of Canterbury ; and he passed a sentence of banishment against all the relations of St. Thomas, against all his household, and even against all the relatives, "the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, nephews and

nieces," of his followers.<sup>2</sup> Our Lord permitted this decree to be issued on Christmas Day, the anniversary of His own entrance upon His homeless exile; as if to console all who were suffering such hardships for His sake. The decree further enjoined, that an oath should be exacted from every person thus exiled, that they would go personally to St. Thomas at Pontigny; for the King well knew how his tender heart would be wounded at the sight of such suffering inflicted on all who were dear to him, for no motive but their connection with him. The decree was cruel; but it was rendered still more cruel by Randulf de Broc, the old enemy of St. Thomas, to whom its execution was intrusted. The very next morning, with the King's apparitors and officials, he appeared at Lambeth, where the oath was exacted from every one who had any connection with the Saint, that they would leave England with the first fair wind, and that they would not tarry by the way until they had shown themselves in their misery to St. Thomas. Those who had given him a night's shelter during his wanderings, and even the relations of his clerics, were treated

<sup>2</sup> The King's first instructions to the sheriffs through England were worded thus: "I command you that if any cleric or layman in your bailiwick shall appeal to the Roman Court, you shall take him and keep him safely till you know my will; and all the income and possessions of the clerks of the Archbishop you shall seize into my hand, as Randulf de Broc and my other ministers shall tell you. And you shall take by sureties the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces of all the clerks who are with the Archbishop, and their chattels, until you know my will thereon; and you shall bring this brief with you when summoned" (*Materials*, v. p. 152).

in the same manner ; delicate females and children, and even infants in arms, not being excepted ; so that the whole number amounted to not less than four hundred. A few escaped actual banishment ; but their condition in England was as hard to bear. They wandered about in dread of arrest ; their friends feared to see them, for it was dangerous to speak with them ; and there was a penalty against those who harboured or helped them. A priest, named William of Salisbury, was imprisoned in Corfe Castle for six months. Three others, who were more wealthy, bought off the persecution against them : Stephen of Everton and Alfred of Wathemestede, each for one hundred pounds ; Thurstan of Croydon<sup>3</sup> paid one hundred marks, after he had been confined for an entire day in a filthy gaol in London amongst thieves. Few, if any, escaped as easily as William Fitzstephen, the biographer, who wrote a rhyming prayer, supposed to be addressed to Almighty God by the King ; and presenting it to his majesty in the chapel at Bruhull, it took the King's fancy, and he was not afterwards molested. The Bishop of London might, if he had been so inclined, have relieved the destitution of such at least of the Archbishop's clerics as were deprived of their ecclesiastical revenues ; for Henry placed them in his hands, and his official, Robert Uscarl, was very diligent in making the most of the benefices, though not for the

<sup>3</sup> Thurstan the cleric in whose house in Kent St. Thomas was ill before he was raised to worldly honours, as Jordan of Plumsted has told us (*Supra*, p. 14).

advantage of the rightful owners. It was not until he had been frequently reproached by the Pope with this connivance with the King's injustice, that the Bishop of London ceased to hold these benefices. Towards the close of the year he transferred them to the royal treasury.

St. Thomas also felt very much a decree by which the King forbade his name to be publicly mentioned in the prayers of the Church. It was remarked of Gilbert Foliot, as a specimen of his policy, that while St. Thomas was in disgrace, he omitted his name from the prayer, but when there was some expectation of a reconciliation, he reinserted it. So, again, some time afterwards, when the King and his son, or, as he was called, the young King, were in accordance, he used to pray "for our Kings;" but when they quarrelled, he resumed the old form, "for our King."

Many of those who were thus cruelly exiled, especially those whose age or sex rendered the journey very difficult, were absolved by the Pope from the oath which had been extorted from them, of at once seeking St. Thomas. These, therefore, stayed in Flanders. But as the number of exiles was very great, the Saint's noble heart was wrung by the frequent arrivals at the Abbey of Pontigny of these sufferers who had offended neither God nor man. The news of such a measure of persecution struck all Europe with astonishment. It was not long before powerful and wealthy people, even those who were personal strangers to the Saint, offered their assist-



ance; and in this work of charity, as might be expected of them, the great nation of France was prominent. Some were sent by the Archbishop to a considerable distance with letters commending them to the protection of lay persons and ecclesiastics; and before very long the poor exiles found that Christendom would not let them suffer anything in addition to the violent breach of every tie that bound them to their country and their home.

“If any one is a defender of the law,” St. Thomas wrote<sup>4</sup> to Stephen the Chancellor of the King of Sicily, “he is held to be an enemy of the King. We are scattered, we are proscribed. Our crime is the assertion of ecclesiastical liberty; for to profess it is under our persecutor to be guilty of high treason. He alone is believed to be a faithful subject, to whom contempt of religion is pleasing, who persecutes the law of God, who despises priests, who venerates as something sacred the cruelties of former tyrants. Because we have dared to speak for the house of the Lord, we are in exile with all our relations and friends, one of whom is Gilbert, my sister’s son, who I affectionately ask may be relieved, when need be, by the liberality of your highness.”

The effect produced upon St. Thomas himself was very great. We have already mentioned that he habitually wore a hair-shirt, and that he was in the habit of very frequently receiving the discipline in secret. In addition to these rigours, with which he prepared his soul for the crosses

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 247.

God destined for him, he now attempted an austerity in his diet, to which he had been unaccustomed all his life. The sluggishness of his circulation, which rendered so much clothing requisite, made it imperative on him to take nourishing food; and for the same reason, he found the use of hot spices, like cloves and ginger, absolutely necessary, even in considerable quantities. In like manner, the wine that was provided for him was always of good quality; though he used it with the greatest moderation. He had ever been sparing, though his food had been delicate; but now he bade the lay-brother who served him bring him the simple conventual fare amongst the dishes which they prepared for him. That it might not be observed that he ate nothing but herbs, he dined apart from his followers. After a few days of this unaccustomed austerity, he fell ill. On one occasion, when Herbert went to him for his usual study of Scripture, finding that he was seriously unwell, he urged him very much to say what was the cause of the illness. St. Thomas attempted to change the subject; but at length, in answer to his friend's importunity, he said that he was not certain, but that he imagined that his illness was owing to this change in his manner of living. He was induced to lay this aside and resume his former diet, when his health was soon restored. The Saint was not, however, content with the mortification of his assiduous study and the simplicity of his new convent home; but the very coldness of the stream that flowed past the

monastery was made by him an instrument of penance, to subdue his flesh and to bring himself into subjection.

While St. Thomas was at Pontigny, he requested the Holy Father, who was still at Sens, to send him the habit of a monk. The Pope blessed one of thick rough cloth, and forwarded it to the Archbishop, with a message to the effect that he had sent him such a one as he had, and not such as he could have wished. He was invested with the habit privately by the Abbot of Pontigny. Alexander Llewellyn was standing by; and when he saw that the capuce or hood was disproportionately small, he said in his dry way, "It is serious enough, but whether it is regular or not I am sure I do not know. It is plain that my lord the Pope has not fitted over well the hood to the cowl." St. Thomas said with a laugh, "It was done on purpose, lest you should mock me again, as you did the other day." "How and when was that, my lord?" said he. "The day before yesterday, when I was vesting for Mass and had put the girdle on, you asked what stuck out so behind. Now you would call me hump-backed, I suppose, if my hood were over-large. So, you see, I am only protected against your gibes." The fact was, that the hair-shirt which the Saint wore from his neck to his knees was very thick and stiff, and gave him an appearance of greater size than he really had; for though his face was full, he was really very thin.

Giraldus<sup>5</sup> says that St. Thomas had the custom,

<sup>5</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis, *De Instructione Principum*, Anglia Christiana Society, Ed. Brewer, 1846, p. 186.

when he was wearied by study, of visiting his clerics in turn, and asking them what they had discovered of interest in the course of their reading. On one occasion coming thus to Alexander the Welshman, he asked him what book he had in hand, and was told, "All Martial's works." "A very proper book for you," rejoined the Saint, for Alexander was a facetious man, as Giraldus and Herbert of Bosham have both recorded of him. "The book is worth transcribing," he said, "if it were only for the two lines I was reading just as you came up; they so exactly fit our case.

Di mihi dent, et tu, quæ tu Trojane mereris,  
Di mihi dent, et tu, quæ volo si merui."

Gods and thou grant me, Trojan, what thy merits claim!  
Gods and thou grant my wish, if I deserve the same!

The Martial was transcribed accordingly, and the copy probably found its way in due time to Canterbury. And indeed we are told in general that the Saint made use of his stay in this religious house to get copies made for the Church of Canterbury of all the best books in the French libraries. He also was at some pains to ascertain what privileges different great churches had obtained from the Holy See, in order that he might gain as many of them as possible for his own.

Meanwhile time was rolling on, and messengers were constantly passing between the parties who were engaged in this struggle. Apparently at first both the Pope and St. Thomas seemed to consider it very advisable that some little time might pass by, in order that the King's anger

might cool down. After a while, the Pope, seeing no improvement, gave great weight to St. Thomas's cause by making him his Legate over England. In the course of his second year at Pontigny, he felt that the time was come for him to exercise the power committed to him. He chose a Cistercian Abbot of one of the dependencies of Pontigny, of the name of Urban, a person described as admirably fitted, from his gentle and winning manners, for the office; and by him he sent letters to the King. The Pope had forbidden St. Thomas to use his powers until the Easter (April 24th) of 1166 should be past; and in the interval he had written to urge Gilbert Foliot to use all his influence with the King to induce him to repent. The application had been quite fruitless; but Gilbert had used all his sophistry to put Henry's conduct in a favourable light before the Pope. The letter<sup>6</sup> which St. Thomas sent by Urban soon after Easter was of the gentlest and most conciliatory tenour. "My lord, the daughter of Sion is held captive in your kingdom. The Spouse of the great King is oppressed by her enemies, afflicted by those who ought most to honour her, and especially by you. Oh, remember what great things God has done for you; release her, reinstate her, and take away the reproach from your generation." This short extract will show the style of the letter, the bearer of which speedily returned, without having been able in the least to move or soften the King.

Another extract will show the yet gentle though

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 266.

stronger tone in which the Saint wrote his second letter<sup>7</sup> to Henry. "Now I am straitened above measure; for a spiritual power has been assigned to me by the same God under whom you hold temporal dominion; and my office constrains me to address your Majesty in a manner which as yet my exile has prevented. It is my duty to exhort you, nay, to warn and rebuke you, lest, if any thing you have done amiss, which, indeed, you have, my silence may endanger my own soul." This letter being as fruitless as that which preceded it, one of a still more solemn character was sent, and by a messenger whose appearance and reputation would add to its weight. A monk of the name of Gerard had won for himself, by his austerities, the surname of The Discalced. He was a man whose peculiar gift it was to reconcile those who were at variance, and he was further remarkable for a very apostolical liberty of speech. Gerard, with another religious, took charge of the Archbishop's letter, of which the following is an extract: "You are my liege lord, and as such I owe you my counsels; you are my son in the Spirit, and I am bound to chasten and correct you. . . . Let my lord, therefore, if it please him, listen to the counsels of his subject, to the warnings of his Bishop, and to the chastisements of his father. And first, let him for the future abstain from all communion with schismatics. It is known almost to the whole world with what devotion your Majesty formerly received our lord the Pope, and what attachment

<sup>7</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 269.

you manifested to the See of Rome; and also what respect and deference were shown you in return. Forbear then, my lord, as you value your soul, to withdraw from that see its just rights. Remember, moreover, the profession you made to my predecessor at your coronation, and which you deposited in writing upon the altar at Westminster, respecting the rights and liberties of the Church in England. Be pleased also to restore to the see of Canterbury, from which you received your consecration, the rank which it held in the time of your predecessors and mine; together with all its possessions, its villages, castles, and farms, and whatever else has been taken by violence, either from myself or my dependents, lay as well as clerical. And further, allow us to return in peace and quietness to the free discharge of our duties.

“Should your Majesty be pleased to act in this manner, you will find me prepared to serve you as a beloved lord and King, faithfully and devotedly, with all my might, in whatsoever I am able,—saving the honour of God and of the Roman Church, and saving my order. *But otherwise, know for certain that you will feel the vengeance of God.*”

This letter was delivered to the King in May, 1166, at Chinon,<sup>8</sup> where he was holding a meeting<sup>9</sup> of his nobles to take counsel against St. Thomas. The answer that it drew was a bitter complaint<sup>10</sup> from Henry addressed to the Abbot of Citeaux, that “your Abbot of Cercamp brought

<sup>8</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 266.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 381.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 365.

a writing from Thomas, who was once our Chancellor, and read it with his own lips, in which we were charged with breach of faith and as it seems with schism, with other words of anger and pride which are derogatory to our honour and person."

This sharp answer to his letter proved to the Archbishop that the King's heart was not by any such measures to be softened towards him. These three extracts of letters have been given, not only on account of their importance as the hearty efforts of the Saint for reconciliation before he proceeded to stronger measures, but also that they may leave upon the reader's mind the impression which the perusal of the whole correspondence would produce, that the Archbishop never resorted to vigorous remedies before every effort to render them unnecessary had been made without effect. St. Thomas was now very anxious; for he felt that the time had arrived when he could be no longer silent regarding the wrongs of his see before the Church and Christendom. The power of the keys was in his hands, as Archbishop and Legate; and he dared not leave it inactive. How these thoughts must have moved him, as he prayed and fasted and did penance for the conversion of the King! how his heart must have burned within him, as he worked with the simple Cistercian brethren in the hay-field and the harvesting, and in all their out-door labours!—for he must have felt what a responsibility lay upon him of using rightly the great powers intrusted to him. What wonder that his heart should have failed him, and in his humility that



he should have thought, as we are told he did think, of resigning his archbishopric into other hands? The dismay at such a proposal of those who, as well as himself, were suffering for the Church, and their lively sense that it would be a desertion of the cause of God, persuaded him that it was a suggestion of the tempter, and that this was a time when personal feelings could not be allowed to interfere with deeds to be done in God and for God.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### VEZELAY.

1166.

King Henry dallies with schism—his angry words against St. Thomas—he appeals to the Holy See against the Saint, who absents himself from Pontigny when the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Lisieux bring notice of the appeal—St. Thomas is confirmed in the primacy and made Legate—his letters to England—he goes to Soissons, and thence to Vezelay, where he publishes various censures—the Bishops appeal—the Pope confirms the censures—the King threatens the Cistercian Order—St. Thomas leaves Pontigny—he foretells his martyrdom to two successive Abbots—he promises the monks a reward—St. Edmund's relics rest in the abbey church—an altar erected there to St. Thomas after his martyrdom—miracles.

KING HENRY had been urged by his hostility to St. Thomas very far towards flagrant schism. That the remark that the Saint made in the letter last quoted was very gentle, when compared to the lengths which the King had gone, is sufficiently plain when we read the opening sentence of Henry's letter to Reginald, Archbishop of Cologne, who was the greatest amongst the followers of the Emperor and the Antipope. "I have long wished for an opportunity to recede from Pope Alexander and his perfidious Cardinals, who dare to uphold against me the traitor Thomas, once Archbishop of Canterbury." Though

he never actually carried into full effect the wicked intentions here expressed, yet it was confidently asserted that he had sent John of Oxford and Richard of Ilchester as his ambassadors to the Emperor, at the Diet of Würzburg, at Whitsuntide, 1165, to pledge his word that he would bring "fifty Bishops" to obey the Antipope;<sup>1</sup> and he knew full well to what spiritual censures such rebellious and schismatical proceedings subjected him. This consciousness, therefore, together with the many causes of complaint which the Church previously had against him, led him, with much reason, to fear that some sentence would be passed against himself, and perhaps against the whole country. He held consequently several councils on the Continent; one more especially at Chinon, as we have already said, where, after complaining bitterly of the letters which St. Thomas had written to him, and of similar letters to the Empress Matilda his mother, he used with tears words which have a terrible prominence on the page of history; for they are, by a singular coincidence, the very same as those which, four years later, led to the martyrdom of St. Thomas. He declared that the Archbishop would take away his body and soul; and he called the knights

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 185. The Emperor Frederic Barbarossa in his diploma respecting the canonization of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle, says that it was done "at the earnest petition of our dearest friend Henry King of England, and by the assent and authority of the Lord Paschal," the Antipope. The effect of this canonization, in itself of course null, has been by the tacit consent of subsequent Popes and the lapse of time, equivalent to beatification (Benedict XIV. *De Canon.* SS. lib. 1, c. ix. n. 4).

around him traitors, for they had not zeal enough to relieve him from the molestations of one man.<sup>2</sup> On this the Archbishop of Rouen rebuked the King with some warmth; yet, from the very gentleness of his disposition, with less severity than God's cause demanded.

The Bishop of Lisieux, who was ever temporizing, recommended an immediate appeal, as the only means of preventing the Archbishop from passing sentence; and Henry consenting, the singular spectacle was shown to the world, of the King who was at war with the Holy See, and who had made laws to prevent appeals, himself appealing to that authority. To the Bishop of Lisieux was added another courtier, the Bishop of Séez; and they hoped, by hastening to the Archbishop, and giving notice of the appeal, to be able to delay matters until Low-week in the following year. The Archbishop of Rouen accompanied them; professing, however, that he did so in order that he might seize every opportunity to promote peace, and not as taking any part in the appeal. The Saint had timely notice of their coming from one of his friends who was at King Henry's Court; and not wishing to see them, he left Pontigny.

It has been already said that, prior to writing the three letters to the King in the last chapter, St. Thomas had been made Apostolic Legate. A

<sup>2</sup> "Tandem dixit quod omnes proditores erant, qui eum adhibita opera et diligentia ab unius hominis infestatione nolebant expedire" (*Materials*, v. p. 381).

bull<sup>3</sup> had been issued, probably on the 8th of April, 1166 (the date it bears is questioned), granting to St. Thomas and his successors in the see of Canterbury, the primacy of England, as fully as it had been held by Lanfranc and Anselm and his other predecessors. Very shortly after this, that is on Easter Day, the 24th of April in this year, 1166, by letters dated from the Lateran,<sup>4</sup> the Pope made St. Thomas his Legate over all England, save only the diocese of York. Of these letters the Saint sent two copies to England; one to the Bishops of Hereford and Worcester, who on the whole had shown themselves the most sensible of their duty to the Archbishop, and on whom he had an especial claim as their consecrator, and the other to the Bishop of London, especially commanding them to communicate them to their fellow-suffragans and to the Bishop of Durham. The letter was placed in the hands of the Bishop of London at the altar at St. Paul's on the festival day, June 30, 1166. Its authority produced a great impression upon him, and he wrote to the King<sup>5</sup> in this strain: "The high authority by which we are now opposed and overwhelmed, compels us to have recourse to your Majesty for counsel and support. No appeal can suspend

<sup>3</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 324. *Vide supra*, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> The date given is Anagni, Oct. 9, but as this is impossible, and as the Pope's letter to the Bishops announcing the Archbishop's legation is dated April 24, from the Lateran, the same date is reasonably assigned to the concession itself (*Materials*, v. p. 329). Herbert (p. 397) expressly says that St. Thomas was Legate at Vezelay, that is in June.

<sup>5</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 417.

an apostolical mandate, which admits of no alternative but to obey or be guilty of disobedience. . . . Your Highness will provide against the disgrace, nay the extinction, which threatens us; if you grant us your royal permission to obey the apostolical mandate and pay the amount of Peter's pence, and of your royal clemency make restitution to the clerics; and if you give the Bishops a command that, in case the Archbishop's letters contain any matter contrary to the customs of the country, they may appeal at once to the Pope or to the Legates who are expected." Poor Gilbert must have bitterly experienced by this time how hard it is to serve two masters as different as God and mammon. Well might he write to the Pope, "To tell the truth in a few words, while matters are in this state between my lord the King and his lordship of Canterbury, it is impossible for me or any other Bishop in this kingdom to obey the commands of the one and avoid the insupportable anger of the other." ✓

There is an interesting letter<sup>6</sup> extant, from the Pope to the Suffragan Bishops of the Province of Canterbury, written a little later than this, explaining the difference between the powers of a Metropolitan and of a Legate. Some of the Bishops had asserted that St. Thomas could interfere with no cases coming from their dioceses, unless they were brought before him by appeal. This the Pope says is true when an Archbishop is acting as Metropolitan, but if he

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 297.

be Legate of the Holy See, he can and ought to hear all causes that come before him from all the dioceses of the Province, whether they come by way of appeal or by complaint of the parties.

✓ St. Thomas left Pontigny soon after he received these Legatine powers, and he went to Vezelay, prepared to use them. This intention however he kept to himself, not communicating it even to the intimate friends of his household. He spent three days at Soissons, keeping vigil by night at three celebrated sanctuaries there. The first was a shrine of our Blessed Lady; the second of St. Drausin, the patron of champions, and much frequented by knights about to engage in judicial combats from all France and Italy;<sup>7</sup> and the third that of St. Gregory the Great, some of whose relics were there venerated. On the 3rd of June, 1166, the day after the Ascension, he went to Vezelay. On the same day he received a message from King Louis, testifying to an illness of the King of England, which had prevented him from attending a conference between them, for which Henry had been very anxious. The Saint consequently postponed his intention of passing censure upon the King. At the petition of the Abbot and the community, St. Thomas celebrated the High Mass on the festival<sup>8</sup> of Pentecost; and after the Gospel, he

<sup>7</sup> John of Salisbury says, "Here Robert of Montfort kept his vigil before his combat with Henry of Essex" (*Materials*, v. p. 382). St. Drausin (Drausius) was the 22nd Bishop of Soissons, the founder of the famous abbey of Notre Dame.

✓ <sup>8</sup> Herbert (p. 391), writing several years afterwards, says that it was the feast of St. Mary Magdalen (July 22nd), to whom the Church was dedicated, and whose relics were there

mounted the pulpit and preached an energetic sermon. After it, he publicly explained what were the real causes at issue between himself and the King, and his own fruitless efforts for a reconciliation; to the astonishment of all, but more especially of his own followers, whom he had not informed of what he was about to do. With every mark of the deepest emotion, he warned King Henry by name of the sentence hanging over him. This he afterwards told Herbert he was obliged by his conscience to do.

But if the King escaped the censure he deserved, several lesser offenders were punished. John of Oxford was excommunicated by St. Thomas as Papal Legate for two offences: for schism, in communicating with the Emperor and with Reginald Archbishop of Cologne; and for usurping the deanery of Salisbury, against the Pope's command. Equally publicly, before the large concourse of people assembled from all nations, St. Thomas excommunicated Richard of Ilchester,<sup>9</sup> then Archdeacon of Poitiers, for com-

honoured; but John of Salisbury, in a letter written at the time (*Materials*, v. p. 383), says that it was Pentecost (June 12th). Gervase (p. 200) follows Herbert; but Nicholas of Mount Rouen mentions the proceedings at Vezelay in a letter which says, that it was expected that on St. Mary Magdalen's day sentence would be passed on the King (*Materials*, v. p. 421), and in the same letter a meeting of the Bishops, subsequent to these proceedings, is said to have been held about the feast of St. John (June 24th).

<sup>9</sup> This Richard of Ivelchester, or Ilchester, who, according to Godwin (*De Prasul. Angl.* p. 216), had also the surnames of Topclif and More, succeeded Henry of Blois as Bishop of Winchester. At the time of his election, he professed himself very devout to St. Thomas. John of Salisbury wrote in 1173 to



municating with the Archbishop of Cologne, Richard de Luci, Jocelin de Bailleul, as the authors of the Constitutions of Clarendon, and Randulf de Broc, Hugh of St. Clair, and Thomas FitzBernard, for usurping the possessions of his Church; and he also published a decree excommunicating *ipso facto* all who should injure the Church of Canterbury. Finally, he suspended Jocelin the Bishop of Salisbury, for manifest disobedience, because he had conferred the deanery of his church on John of Oxford; though he had been duly warned that he was not to give it to any one whom the King might name, but to wait until the Canons of Salisbury, who were in exile with St. Thomas, could unite with the rest of the chapter to exercise the right which belonged to them of electing their Dean.

In addition to these sentences, he published anew the Pope's condemnation of the following Constitutions of Clarendon, excommunicating any one who should act on their authority:

1. That a Bishop may not excommunicate any tenant of the King without the King's license.
2. That a Bishop may not punish any person of his diocese for perjury or breach of faith.
3. That clerics be subjected to lay tribunals.
4. That questions of churches or tithes be tried by laymen.

recommend him to Humbald the Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, saying, "He loves your friend the glorious Martyr of Christ with such affection, that he has made himself his servant; so that he consoles his followers, many of whom flock to him in their necessities, and he tries with all his might to imitate him" (Ep. Jo. Sar. ii. p. 277).

5. That no appeals be made for any cause whatever to the Apostolic See, except with the permission of the King and his officials.

6. That no Archbishop, Bishop, or other dignitary, may attend a summons from the Pope without the King's leave.

These, he said, were not the only enactments of Clarendon which are against the Divine law and the constitutions of the holy Fathers. The Archbishop absolved all the Bishops from the unlawful promise which they had made of observing these constitutions; and wrote to them all to that effect, as the Holy See had given him instructions.

The Bishops of Lisieux and Séez, with the Archbishop of Rouen, as has been already intimated, did not find St. Thomas at Pontigny when they came with notice of the King's appeal. When he returned, he found the formalities of the notice awaiting him; and though many of his followers advised him to disregard the appeal as being invalid, yet he determined to do nothing whatever without the Pope.

All the parties concerned appealed to the Pope from St. Thomas's sentence. Gilbert Foliot interceded with the King that the Bishop of Salisbury might have leave to do so; and the words in which he makes the request shows how sadly he was changed from the fervent religious of Clugny and Gloucester, or the zealous Bishop of Hereford. Two clerics consequently arrived at Pontigny; one on the part of the Bishop of Salisbury, and the other on that of John of Oxford. The

latter denied that his master had had any schismatical intercourse with the Emperor or with Reginald of Cologne ; and said that, as a member of the household of one of the clerics of the chapel-royal, he was charged to inform the Archbishop that the King himself instituted an appeal, for the term of which he named the second Sunday after Easter of the following year. St. Thomas replied, that he came without any proof that he was sent by the King ; and still further, that as he confessed to having communicated with John of Oxford, an excommunicated person, he was himself excommunicate ; and therefore that his appeal was invalid.

The Bishops met on the 24th of June ; and they also appealed, naming next Ascension Day as the term. They wrote two long letters ;<sup>10</sup> one to St. Thomas and the other to the Pope. St. Thomas and his followers read in these letters the

<sup>10</sup> *Materials*, v. pp. 403, 408. Though written in the name of all the Bishops, these bore the seals but of three—London, Winton, and Hereford (*Materials*, vi. p. 65). The last two names it is not a little surprising to find in such a position. Neither St. Thomas nor the Bishop of Winchester forgot the relationship then felt to be incurred by consecration (*Ibid.* p. 345). Henry of Winton was one of the first of the English Bishops who dared to act according to the laws of the Church and his conscience ; and the affection St. Thomas bore him is beautifully shown in the conclusion of one of his letters to him (Ep. St. Tho. i. p. 338) : " May your holiness fare well, father to be beloved, and remember to commend to God in your prayers *your creation*,—I speak of our littleness." To Robert of Hereford St. Thomas wrote, "*Doleo super te, frater, fili mi primogenite.*" For putting his seal to this letter the Bishop of Hereford received a very severe and cutting rebuke from Ernisius, the Abbot, and the Prior of St. Victor's at Paris, in the name of his former scholars (*Materials*, v. p. 456).

style and spirit of Gilbert Foliot; and in a very full answer<sup>11</sup> to them the Saint says so. This drew from Gilbert's pen a letter,<sup>12</sup> which was in all probability never sent; for it, and it alone, of all the letters on the subject, is not noticed either by St. Thomas or any of his correspondents; a letter which is so calumnious, that its very falsehood is regarded by one modern writer as a proof of its spuriousness; a letter which probably never was delivered on account of its very calumny, the exposure of which could not have been difficult; and which has provided modern opponents of St. Thomas, who consider its being unanswered as a proof of its unanswerableness, with matter for what they very truly call a view of the conduct of St. Thomas through the whole controversy, from the beginning to the end, very different from that to be found any where else.

These lesser appeals were all unsuccessful. When *Bonus Pastor* Sunday (the second after Easter) of 1167 came, Jocelin of Salisbury did not appear to prosecute his appeal; and the Pope confirmed the suspension, and all the other sentences passed at Vezelay. He also commanded the Archbishop to condemn all who had usurped Church property; and though he did not give any especial directions regarding the King, he expressly left the Saint's own ecclesiastical powers free; and he wrote to the Bishops, warning them that all such sentences he would uphold.

The stay of St. Thomas at Pontigny was now coming to an end, owing to the machinations of



<sup>11</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 490.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 521. See Note C.

the King of England. Although the appeals were pending, the King immediately sent over into England Walter de Lisle, who is described as a good man, and an unwilling bearer of such orders, with commands that all the ports should be very strictly watched, lest any sentence passed by the Archbishop should find admission. In another parliament at Clarendon, he exacted an oath from the Bishops and nobles, that they would not give the Archbishop any assistance, nor receive any letters from him; and he also included in the oath the receipt of any letters from the Pope, and appeals to any one save himself. In the September following, on Holy Cross Day (Sept. 14, 1166), the general chapter of the Cistercian Order was held as usual. The King sent them a letter to the effect that they were harbouring one of his enemies; and warned them that, as they valued their possessions in his dominions on either side of the Channel, they should cease to do so. After the three days of the chapter, Gilbert, Abbot of Citeaux, the Bishop of Pavia, who had once been a monk of the order, and several other Abbots, came to Pontigny. They showed the Saint the letter which they had received; and added, that they did not send him away from amongst them, but they left the matter to the dictates of his own prudence and affection for their order. The meaning of this message was sufficiently plain; and St. Thomas replied, that he would certainly go elsewhere; and that he trusted to the Lord, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, to provide

for him and his fellow-exiles. On the following day the Abbots departed, leaving Guarin de Galardim, the good Abbot of Pontigny, and his charitable community full of sorrow at their approaching loss, and of compassion for the homeless Prelate and his household. The true sympathy and warm active charity of this noble abbey more than compensates for the want of heroism shown by the chapter of Citeaux. Abbot Guichard, who had been summoned to Sens by the Pope, that he might introduce our Saint to him, and who had so gladly and hospitably received him, had been consecrated at Montpellier by the Pope himself to the Archbishopric of Lyons on the 8th of August of the previous year (1165);<sup>13</sup> but his successor had inherited his charity and his hospitable spirit as well as the abbatial mitre and staff.

While St. Thomas was at Pontigny, he received from God a foreknowledge of what was to happen to him. One day, after he had said Mass, while he was making his thanksgiving before the altar of St. Stephen with that fervour which distinguished all his devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, he heard a voice, which called, "Thomas! Thomas!" He answered, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And our Lord said to him, "I am Jesus Christ, thy Lord and thy Brother; My Church shall be glorified in thy blood, and thou shalt be glorified in Me." When the Saint was leaving the church, he found that he had not been alone,



<sup>13</sup> He did not obtain possession before St Martin's day, November 11, 1167 (*Materials*, vi. 279).

as he thought, but that the Abbot was waiting for him by one of the columns, and had heard all. The Saint bound him to silence on the subject until the promise should be accomplished.

The successor of this Abbot received a similar intimation; for on the day of his departure from Pontigny, the good Guarin accompanied the cavalcade on its way; and it was remarked that St. Thomas, who was usually very cheerful in travelling, was now very sorrowful, keeping apart from his companions and fellow-travellers. The Abbot urged him very much to tell him what was the matter, upbraiding him freely for the effeminacy of his attachment, as it seemed to him, to the home he was leaving. At length the Saint, under a promise of secrecy, told him that the cause of his sorrow was a revelation he had received, in a vision the night before, of the martyrdom by which this trouble was to end. "Yet," he said, "I am not so sorrowful for the revelation, for which I rather give the Most High all the thanks in my power; but I grieve for those who follow me, and have borne so much for me, for I know for a certainty that when I am struck down, the sheep will have no shepherd." The Abbot smiled, and said, "So, then, you are going to be martyred. What has a man who eats and drinks to do with martyrdom?" His answer was saintly in its humility: "I know that I am too fond of worldly pleasures; but the Lord is good, who justifies the wicked, and He has deigned to reveal this to me, who am all unworthy." He then recounted the vision, that in some church,

he knew not where, he was defending his cause before the Pope and Cardinals, the Pope being on his side, but the Cardinals against him, when four soldiers rushed in, and in that same church attacked him, and cut off that part of his head that was anointed at his consecration, now marked by his tonsure; and from this he gathered that it was God's will to make known to him that by a hard though precious death he would glorify Him. He told this vision afterwards to the Abbot of Val-luisant also, under similar conditions of secrecy; and after his martyrdom both these witnesses made it public. With what fervour St. Thomas must have spent the four years that were to intervene, with this sense of his coming martyrdom ever before his eyes, we may piously conceive.

On his departure, he made a promise<sup>14</sup> to the monks that a successor of his should recompense them for their goodness to him. When Cardinal Stephen Langton received shelter from them, while excluded from his see by King John, he made a grant to the abbey of fifty marks sterling from the revenues of the benefice of Romney. To this St. Edmund, under similar circumstances, added ten; and the blessed Archbishop Boniface of Savoy,<sup>15</sup> in 1264, out of gratitude to them for the refuge thus afforded to three Archbishops of

<sup>14</sup> Martene, *Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. p. 1873.

<sup>15</sup> At the prayer of King Charles Albert, Pope Gregory XVI., by a decree 7th September, 1838, approved of the immemorial honour this English Archbishop has received at Hautecombe in Savoy, where he is buried and venerated as a saint.



Canterbury,<sup>16</sup> gave them the whole of the tithes of the same rectory. But the fulfilment of St. Thomas's prophecy was a far nobler treasure; and he was afterwards understood by the monks of Pontigny to have referred to the holy relics of St. Edmund, of which their church was and still is the resting-place; and this is asserted in the bull of his canonisation by Pope Innocent IV.<sup>17</sup> The first cure performed at St. Edmund's tomb was that of a poor cripple, whom the monks called Thomas, out of gratitude to our Saint.

But long before there was an altar of St. Edmund in that grand old Abbey church of Pontigny, there was an altar of St. Thomas of Canterbury; and we have the account of a miracle wrought by St. Thomas's intercession in a letter<sup>18</sup> written by Peter Abbot of Pontigny to Benedict Prior of Canterbury in the year 1176 or 1177. One of the monks named Ponce had suffered for ten weeks from paralysis of the right side united with epilepsy. He obtained his Abbot's leave to vow a pilgrimage to St. Thomas, but instead of any improvement, he grew so much worse that in the middle of the night his attendants summoned the Abbot and a part of the community from Matins to give him Extreme Unction. The following day, which was Saturday before Palm Sunday, he seemed to be dying, and everything

<sup>16</sup> Martene, *Thes. Nov. Anecd.* iii. pp. 1247, 1254, 1255, 1824, 1853, 1904.

<sup>17</sup> Lyons, 11 Jan. 1247. *Bullar. Roman.* Alban Butler (Nov. 16) erroneously says Innocent V.

<sup>18</sup> Will. Cant. pp. 512, 532, 533.

was prepared for his funeral. But in the evening, waking up from the sleep of death, he rose and began to walk with the help of sticks. Soon he found that he was quite well, and with his attendants he hastened down to the church, where the Abbot was at that moment giving holy water to the monks after Compline. When the Abbot, who tells the story, had recovered from his stupefaction, he sprinkled him also with holy water, and Brother Ponce went to spend the night in thanksgiving at the altar of St. Thomas.

The Book of Miracles by William of Canterbury, in which this story is given, mentions two other persons belonging to Pontigny. One of them was Robert, who had been a servant of St. Thomas when he was Chancellor, and had become a lay-brother at Pontigny. He was suffering from a quinsy, which took away his power of speech, and for a week he had been without food. In the night he heard a voice saying, "Brother Robert, can you not speak?" The sick man paying no attention, the same thing was repeated, and the third time he heard, "Robert, speak to me, I am Thomas." Looking up, he saw his old master by the light of the lamp, and calling out in his eagerness, "Thomas, Thomas!" the quinsy broke and the good monk used his newly-recovered speech in prayer and praise.

The other story tells us that Guarin, Abbot of Pontigny, being elected Archbishop of Bourges, in 1174, the day of his consecration came, and only two Bishops appeared for the consecration.

As the morning wore on, and all were fretting at the delay, one of the Abbots present said that he had dreamt the night before that Alexander the Welshman, St. Thomas's cleric, had come to say that his master would be present as a fourth Bishop at the consecration on the following day. Dinner-time coming, the Archbishop-elect returned to his palace, giving up all hope of consecration for that day, when the Bishop of Cahors galloped into the town, he and his suite having been detained and nearly lost in a flood. The consecration was now able to proceed, and the third Bishop having come, the promised presence of the fourth was piously inferred.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### SENS.

1166.

The Saint leaves Pontigny—hospitality of King Louis, by whom he is maintained at Sens—the Pope's journeys—St. Thomas accompanies him to Bourges—subsequent miracle where he lived—"sweet France"—John of Oxford successful in his appeal—the Saint remonstrates against the appointment of Cardinal William of Pavia as Legate—Cardinals William and Otho appointed Legates, with full powers—John of Oxford lands in England—St. Thomas, John of Salisbury, and Lombard of Piacenza write to the Pope.

WHEN the exiles were left together, on the announcement having been made which led to the decision to leave Pontigny, the question was discussed whither they now should go. They seem to have been very cheerful in their difficulty, one of them saying, to the amusement of the others, that they must go where they could, as they could not go where they would. Herbert's mind reverted to the interview he had had with King Louis; and he reminded St. Thomas of the promises and offers which that King had made to him at Soissons two years before, which he had declined at the time. The Saint said, "It would seem, my brother, that you are looking out for the pleasures of a city and a King's Court, which hardly suit our bonds in the Gospel." He was,

however, persuaded that, as they had no choice left, it would be better to send Herbert on another visit to King Louis, as his first had been so successful. The King was travelling when Herbert found him; and on the motives that made St. Thomas wish to move being told him, he cried out to those around him, "O religion, O religion, where art thou? Those whom we believed to be dead to the world, fear its threats; and professing to despise the things that perish, for their sake turn back from the work of God which they had taken in hand, and drive God's exile from them." Then, turning to Herbert, he said, "Salute your lord the Archbishop, and promise him in my name, that though the world and those who are dead to the world desert him, I will not. Let him tell us what city or castle or other place of our dominions he would prefer, and he shall find it prepared for him." The city of Sens, while Pope Alexander had resided there, had been frequently visited by them, and seemed to them to combine all that they could wish; St. Thomas therefore chose the royal abbey of St. Columba, a small distance from Sens, famous as the resting-place of the holy virgin from whom it takes its name. Here he remained, living at the expense of the King of France,<sup>1</sup> from St. Martin's Day, No-

<sup>1</sup> Gerv. p. 201. The Pope had recommended King Louis, in a letter from Montpellier, Aug. 6, 1165, to assign to our Saint any French bishopric or abbey that might fall vacant (*Materials*, v. p. 198). The report was general at one time that he had been made Chancellor of France (*Ibid.* p. 421). The Pope blamed the Abbey of Pontigny and the Cistercian Order very severely for their timidity (*Ibid.* v. p. 426).

vember 11th, 1166, until his exile was exchanged for martyrdom.

After Easter in 1165, that is, when St. Thomas had been about six months at Pontigny, Pope Alexander departed from Sens on his way back to Rome, in answer to the request made to him by the Roman clergy and people. He left Montpellier after the Assumption, and entered Rome on the 23rd of November, amidst unusual festivities. He was not left there long in peace; for in the following year the schismatical Emperor Frederic Barbarossa besieged the city, in order that he might place the Antipope on the chair of St. Peter. The siege being successful, the Pope was obliged to leave Rome; and he went in the disguise of a pilgrim to Gaeta, and from thence to Benevento. It was not until 1171, when St. Thomas's labours were over, that he returned to Rome. Alan says, that on the Pope's departure, the Archbishop accompanied the Holy Father as far as Bourges; and the further assertion of the same biographer cannot be otherwise than true, that this was the last time that they met upon earth.

While at Bourges, St. Thomas received hospitality from the canons of St. Oustrille (Austregisilus), and they considered themselves abundantly repaid by a miracle that was wrought at his invocation years afterwards on a young man attached to their church. This we learn from a letter<sup>2</sup> of John of Salisbury to Prior Odo, written before 1175. The miracle was related at

<sup>2</sup> Will. Cant. p. 458.

Bourges in the presence of the King of France at an assembly of Bishops and nobles, "where all were praising the liberality of the martyr, his courtesy and magnificence towards men, his faith, his zeal for the law and the perseverance of the constancy which he had had in God from the beginning of his promotion."

From Bourges the Pope addressed a letter<sup>3</sup> on the 17th of May, 1165, thanking the community of Pontigny for all their kindness to the Archbishop, and begging that St. Thomas might find their charity ever more fervent, in spite of all threats and terrors. It was not with these hospitable monks only that the exiles met with kindness. William, the Archbishop of Sens, and the clergy and people, received them with much joy; and they were entertained in so kind a manner in their new home, that Herbert, who is the only one of St. Thomas's biographers who was with him at this time, writes with much feeling the praises of "sweet France." Who can yet tell what graces that country has received and still receives from the glorified martyr, with whom in his trouble the warm-hearted nation so nobly sympathised?

The King's appeal had for some time past been prosecuted. He had sent John of Oxford to the Pope, who managed to convince the Holy Father that he had been guiltless of schismatic intercourse with the Emperor and his adherents; and who justified himself for having accepted the deanery of Salisbury, in spite of the Pope's prohibition, by the extraordinary statement that he

<sup>3</sup> *Materials*, v. p. 172.

had been forced to accept it by the King. However, he resigned it into the Pope's hands; and the Holy Father absolved him from his excommunication, and himself conferred the deanery upon him, investing him with a gold ring by his own hand.<sup>4</sup> He afterwards boasted that he had received a personal exemption from the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury or any other Bishop.

Having been thus successful with his own affairs, he prosecuted with great apparent success those of his master. The King's request was, that Legates might be appointed to hear and adjudge the whole case, especially requesting that the Cardinal William of Pavia might be one of them.

St. Thomas had also his messengers and representatives with the Pope. He represented in several letters that the King of England had imprisoned a priest, who is called William the Chaplain,<sup>5</sup> whose brother was on one occasion the bearer of letters; and the Saint argued that the King was therefore *ipso facto* excommunicate. He also pleaded very warmly against any Legates being sent, and especially against William of Pavia. "May it please your Holiness not to expose our innocence to peril at the hands of my lord William of Pavia, through whom our perse-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 141, 170, 177.

<sup>5</sup> This is William of Salisbury, who as we have already seen, was kept in Corfe Castle for six months (*Supra*, p. 14). He was imprisoned in the diocese of Salisbury, which was therefore placed under interdict (*Materials*, vi. p. 32). The Pope wrote to the King requiring the release of the priest (*Ibid.* v. p. 169).



cutors boast that they will cause us to be deposed: Whether he is to come with such powers, we know not; but this we know, that unless compelled by your Holiness, we shall never trust ourself to any judge except your Holiness. Far be it from the Church of God that such things should be accomplished, as a priest, who is one of the clerics of our above-named friend and lord, but just now has promised to the King of England, that as Legate he will determine the cause at issue between us to the King's liking. The brother of the priest who is in prison will communicate the rest. May it please your Holiness to compassionate ourself and them, and the whole Church of God."<sup>6</sup> Similar letters were sent to the Cardinal Henry of Pisa, at whose persuasion, it will be remembered, St. Thomas accepted the archbishopric; and to the Cardinals Hyacinth and Boso, who had been his constant friends in the Sacred College.

St. Thomas had not been long at Sens when his messengers returned, who had been sent to oppose the appeal which John of Oxford was promoting in the King's name. They reported his absolution and restoration to the deanery of Salisbury, and that he had succeeded in obtaining from the Pope that Legates should be sent, and that the Cardinals, William of Pavia, priest of St. Peter's Chains, and Otho, deacon of St. Nicholas in the Tullian Prison, should be appointed. This was arranged towards the close of the year. The particular powers with which these

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 53.

Cardinals were to be intrusted it was not very easy for St. Thomas to ascertain. The letter<sup>7</sup> which the Holy Father wrote to him to announce the appointment spoke of the peace which he hoped they would be able to effect between himself and the King, bidding him give way in anything that would promote agreement, "saving your own and the Church's honour," as the letter twice qualifies it; and it advises him to trust William of Pavia, for he had solemnly promised the Pope to do his utmost to promote an understanding. The Pope's letter to the Bishops<sup>8</sup> dated from the Lateran, December 1, 1166, speaks more plainly of the powers of these Legates, as "persons *de latere nostro*, with fulness of power to hear this cause and such others as they shall judge expedient, and to terminate them canonically, as the Lord shall enable them." He added faculties by which any one whom St. Thomas had excommunicated might be absolved in danger of death, under the usual conditional oath of submitting themselves to the judgment of the Pope in case of recovery. In like manner, in his letter to the King,<sup>9</sup> the Pope says that he has sent them "in the fulness of his power," and that he had "committed to them the fulfilment of his own office in all things, with that fulness with which

<sup>7</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 88.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 125. A copy of this letter was sent to St. Thomas by a friend, under a strong injunction that he should show it to no one but Master Gunter, for so the transcriber had strictly promised Master Walter [perhaps de l'Isle] from whom he had it.

the Roman Church was accustomed to delegate." The tenour of these letters shows that John of Oxford was not without reason in boasting of his success. But he exaggerated it when he said that the King was exempted from the power of all bishops, so that the Pope alone could excommunicate him, and when he spoke of one Legate only, to be sent with full powers, Cardinal William of Pavia, the Saint's avowed enemy. The appointment of Cardinal Otho as co-Legate was held largely to mitigate the dangers arising from the hostility of the Cardinal of Pavia; or, as the Bishop of Poitiers puts it,<sup>10</sup> "The malice of one star, if not extinguished, is tempered and weakened by the conjuncture of another star, more propitious and favourable."

The following account of the arrival of John of Oxford in England is from St. Thomas's own pen.<sup>11</sup> The facts mentioned in it were related to him by the Bishop of Hereford's chaplain, a canon regular and a trustworthy person, whom the Bishop had sent over to make his excuses to the Archbishop for not appearing, in answer to three summonings which he had received from St. Thomas to appear in person before him by the Purification. "On his landing, he found our brother the Bishop of Hereford waiting for a wind to cross the water, and in concealment; for the King's officers would have prevented his crossing openly. On finding him, he forbade him to proceed, first in the name of the King, and then of his Holiness the Pope. The Bishop then

<sup>10</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 150.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 147.

inquired, as I am assured by his messenger, who came afterwards to excuse his lordship's non-appearance, 'whether he had any letters to that effect.' He asserted that he had, and that the Pope forbade him, and the other Bishops as well, either to attend our summons or obey us in anything till the arrival of the Pope's Legate *à latere*, who had been obtained by the King, and was coming with full powers to determine the matter on which they had appealed, and the principal cause and all its incidents. The Bishop insisted on seeing the letters; but he said that he had sent them on with his baggage to Winchester, about twelve miles from Southampton. On considering the matter, the Bishop sent back his cleric to Winchester, Master Edward, in whose veracity I confide; and he saw the letters in company with the Bishop of London, who was likewise waiting to cross the water. When the Bishop of London saw them, he said aloud, as if unable to restrain himself, 'Then Thomas shall be no more Archbishop of mine.'"

And here we must interrupt the perusal of St. Thomas's letter to say that Robert de Melun returned to his see at Hereford, and there died. His death was caused, according to Fitzstephen,<sup>12</sup> by mortification at not being allowed to obey the Archbishop's letter of summons. He died on the 28th of February, 1167.<sup>13</sup> The see was kept vacant

<sup>12</sup> Fitzstephen, p. 87.

<sup>13</sup> Godwin, p. 483. It is clear from the events above narrated, that to assign the death of the Bishop of Hereford to the year 1166 (*Materials*, iii. p. 87) must be an error, due probably to that

six years; and then Robert Foliot, cousin to the Bishop of London, who was at this time Archdeacon of Oxford, succeeded him.

The narrative in the Saint's letter continues thus: "John of Oxford added, that his own person was privileged, so that we had no power to excommunicate him, or even rebuke him, except in the Pope's presence; and that he might present the deanery of Salisbury to any one he pleased; and that our authority was in all points curtailed till the Legates' arrival."

This news produced the greatest consternation amongst all St. Thomas's friends. The Saint's own warm disposition led him to feel it deeply, and to express himself on the subject strongly. The letter from which the above extract is taken was written to one of his retinue, named John, who was representing him at Rome, and it contains the following reflections, which place before us in a strong light his disappointment and anxiety:

"If this is true, then without doubt his lordship the Pope has suffocated and strangled, not only our own person, but himself and every ecclesiastic of both kingdoms, yea, both churches together, the French and the English. For what will not the Kings of the earth dare against the clergy under cover of this most wretched precedent? And on what can the Church of Rome rely, when it thus deserts and leaves destitute the

fertile source of misdatings, the ancient commencement of the new year on Lady day. On the 8th of January Robert Bishop of Lincoln also died (Hoved. fol. 293 b).

persons who are making a stand in its cause, and contending for it even unto death? And what if anything should befall his Holiness the Pope, while the King and others are in possession of these privileges and exemptions? They will be transmitted to posterity, from whose hands none will be able to wrest them. Nay more, let the Church say yea or nay, other princes will extort like privileges and exemptions for themselves, till in the end the liberty of the Church perishes, and with it the power and jurisdiction of the Bishops. For none will be at hand to coerce the wickedness of tyrants, whose whole efforts are at this day concentrated against God's Church and ministers. Nor will they desist till these are reduced to like servitude with the rest.

"However, the result is as yet unseen; what we do see is, that whether the above assertions are true or false, we, at any rate, are troubled above measure. No obedience or respect is now shown us in anything, either by the Bishops or Abbots, or any of the clergy; as if our deposition was now a settled thing. Of one thing, however, let his lordship the Pope assure himself; no consideration shall induce us to enter the King's territories as a litigant, nor to accept our enemies as our judges, especially my lord of Pavia, who thirsts for our blood, that he may fill our see, which, as we understand, is promised him in case he rids the King of us. There is another thing that grieves us. The great men of France—nobles, bishops, and other dignitaries—as if despairing of our cause, have sent back our un-

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happy co-exiles, whom their charity has sustained; and these must perish of cold and hunger, as some, indeed, have perished already. Be careful to impress all this upon his lordship the Pope, that if, as we even yet hope, some zeal of God remains with him, he may take steps to relieve us."

John of Salisbury wrote the Holy Father a strong letter on the subject, and so did Lombard of Piacenza, the future Cardinal Archbishop of Benevento, who now styles himself "subdeacon of the Roman Church."<sup>14</sup> The latter urged upon the Pope first the anger of the King of France, who declared that "his Holiness could not have given him greater molestation if the cause for which he was sending Legates had been to take away his own crown." After saying that the result was, that "the sweet savour of his Holiness's name was in part impaired," he adds, "and what makes matters still worse, it seems the general belief that the day of victory for his lordship of Canterbury and your Holiness was at hand. For the King was so terrified when the day of appeal had lapsed, that he asserted that the Bishops had not engaged in it by his commands or advice, and that he would take no part with them in the matter. The Bishops, too, were in such a strait, and in such dread of an interdict, that some were sending messengers to his lordship of Canterbury, and others were on their way to attend his summons, when John of Oxford, as if with legatine authority, forbade them to obey in your Holiness's

<sup>14</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 176, 170; cf. *ibid.* p. 497.

name. On this occasion the Bishop of Hereford was recalled, when he was actually at the sea-side waiting to cross." Finally, he says that he "has often heard it asserted, and in many quarters, that the King's whole hope rests in your Holiness's misfortunes, and in what I pray God of His infinite mercy long to avert—your death; for he asserts that he will never recognize your successor till all the dignities and customs of his realm have been acknowledged by him. And now it is believed that these Legates have been demanded by him only in subtlety, that for the time he may evade excommunication and his realm an interdict; and that thus he hopes, during your Holiness's life, to render void the Archbishop's authority, till he can make terms with your successor."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE CARDINAL LEGATES.

1167.

Double dealings of John of Oxford—limitation of the powers of the Cardinal Legates—their long journey—letter of William of Pavia and two draughts of an answer—the Cardinals visit St. Thomas at Sens and King Henry at Caen—meeting at Les Planches between the Cardinal Legates and the Saint—the Cardinals return to the King who shows them discourtesy—councils and conferences—fresh appeals—the Cardinals' departure.

MATTERS were not, however, really as bad as they seemed. John of Oxford was well known to St. Thomas to be so reckless and unscrupulous a person, that he currently went amongst the Archbishop's friends by the nickname of "the Swearer." Two of the King's envoys, John Cumin and Ralph of Tamworth, who left Rome on the 1st of January, and reached Poitiers by the Purification, told the Bishop of that place, who was one of St. Thomas's greatest friends, that John of Oxford ingratiated himself with the Pope, by suggesting that peace might be restored between the Archbishop and the King, if any one could be found to negotiate it faithfully; having the effrontery to say, that he would undertake to do this himself. For this reason the other royal envoys loudly called him a traitor to the King;

because for his own ends he promised to do what the King regarded as impossible. But after a while what was rumoured and suspected from the beginning became certain, that John of Oxford had gone much further, and in the King's name had sworn to all the Archbishop could have wished, before the Pope granted the legation, with a view to pacification. Thus writes John of Salisbury to Milo Bishop of Théroutanne:<sup>1</sup> "We hope in our Father, Who is Lord of all, that before long he will turn this storm into a gentle breeze; although the Church's enemies boast that a worse shipwreck awaits us. It is not true to say that the Church of Rome has turned against us, and that our lord the Pope has assented to all the petitions of the King of England. Perhaps people were misled by finding that those who had been excommunicated were absolved at the return of John of Oxford; and that he himself, as if he had done right in communicating with the schismatical emperor, had had the deanery of Salisbury restored to him from the Pope's own hand. But any one who paid attention to what was done at Rome would see, that though the Pope was deceived, he always faithfully upheld our cause and the Church's. Before John was absolved, he publicly swore (and I hope he did not perjure himself) that he had done nothing among the schismatics against the faith of the Church, or the honour and service of the Pope. He then produced commendatory

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 198. "Miloni Episcopo Morinorum." Théroutanne was destroyed by Charles V. in 1553, as the old and very neat chronogram records: *DeLetI MorInI*.

letters and petitions from the King, which said that he was to be believed with the credit that was due to the King himself. Acting on this authority, he committed to the judgment of the Pope the cause at issue between the King and the Archbishop, respecting the wicked customs, that at his pleasure they should have all force or none, and that peace should be concluded with the Archbishop on the terms the Pope might dictate. When he had confirmed this with an oath, he obtained from his Holiness a promise that the legates should be sent. It is reported that they have been stopped on their way, in consequence of the discovery of the Swearer's treachery." How far King Henry was responsible for obtaining favours from the Pope on conditions which he never meant to fulfil, it is hard to say; most probably, John of Oxford, finding his powers ample, preferred an apparent success, gained through an unscrupulous oath, which he must have known his master would not ratify, to returning unsuccessful. Besides, the moment was critical. The legatine powers conferred upon St. Thomas were bringing the Bishops to a sense of their duty; and the King, who found the battle difficult with the Archbishop alone, would have been unable to contend with the clergy of the kingdom, if united. It was therefore essential to gain some concession from the Pope, which should hamper St. Thomas, at least for a time; and it was gained, though with a terrible violation of the sanctity of an oath.

When these things reached the Pope's ears,

notwithstanding the letters of remonstrance which have been already given, he was very unwilling to give up all hope of a reconciliation. John of Oxford had written to him to say that the King of England had liberated such ecclesiastics as he had imprisoned; and that he was willing to confirm to the Church all that liberty which she had had in his realm in the time of King Henry his grandfather. This phrase, which makes its appearance now for the first time, though it is afterwards repeated, is but a quibble; for the King professed to claim the Constitutions of Clarendon on the very ground that they were customs. Still it seemed to the Pope that peace might be concluded, and he therefore wrote<sup>2</sup> from Rome, on May 7, 1167, to the Cardinals, William of Pavia and Otho, that their first duty was to console the Archbishop, and that their only task was to arrange this reconciliation to the satisfaction of both parties; commanding them not to set foot in King Henry's dominions until the reconciliation had taken place. Similar instructions were sent to them from Benevento, on the 22nd of August. This was practically to take away the powers of the Legates, and to restore his liberty to St. Thomas; and Humbert, the Archdeacon of Bourges, afterwards Archbishop of Milan, and ultimately Pope Urban III., who went to meet them at Chateauroux, wrote to the Archbishop,<sup>3</sup> that, as far as he could learn from them in person, such was the case.

The year 1167 was far advanced before the

<sup>2</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 200, 232.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 202.

Cardinals arrived who had been named legates in the previous December, but whose powers since May had been restricted to a mere mediation. Cardinal Otho wrote from Montpellier, where he was waiting for his co-legate William of Pavia, that his journey had been long because it had been necessary to go to Venice in disguise, owing to the state of Italy, where the Emperor was with his troops; and that he had stayed some time at Brescia, his native place. This Cardinal St. Thomas did not dread as a mediator, as he did his colleague William of Pavia, who also wrote, but in a style that made the Saint seriously uneasy. Considering that they had no powers whatever, but were simply peacemakers, the following sentence left the impression that its writer intended to assume an authority that did not belong to him, which, as he was notoriously a partisan, might have serious consequences: "Our venerable brother Otho, Cardinal Deacon, and ourself are on our way to his (the King's) territory, with a commission to determine the questions at issue between your lordship and himself, as shall seem to us best for the interests of the Church of God; and we would seriously press your lordship, as far as in you lies, to avoid all steps that may tend to widen the breach, but zealously to co-operate in whatever may facilitate an arrangement." To this letter St. Thomas prepared two several answers, but they were never sent; for John of Salisbury, whom the Saint consulted respecting them, freely condemned them, as far too severe and not respectful

enough to be sent to a cardinal-legate ; and he himself suggested a substitute. There is scarcely anything so beautiful in the life of St. Thomas as the spirit in which he received and encouraged John of Salisbury's constant and free criticisms on himself and his proceedings.

As the Cardinals had to pass by Sens, they naturally visited St. Thomas first. They had to thank the intercession of the Saint with King Louis for their liberty of passing through France, which that King was strongly inclined to refuse. They then went on to visit King Henry, who was at Caen ; with whom they spent a long time without sending the Archbishop any account of their proceedings. This was quite in accordance with the idea which the friends of St. Thomas entertained, that the King's sole object was to protract all negotiations, and that he was insincere in treating about terms of reconciliation at all. However, St. Thomas was summoned by them to a conference, to be held on the confines of France and Normandy, at a spot between the towns of Trie and Gisors.

On the night before the conference the Archbishop dreamed, as he told his companions on the way, that poison was offered him in a golden cup. In the course of the day, they thought they saw it verified in the person of the Cardinal William of Pavia, whose proposals were plausible and elegantly put, though they were destructive of the liberty of the Church. The King of France was himself present at the interview, and he had provided for the Archbishop's accommodation.

In a letter, in which St. Thomas himself describes this interview to the Pope, he says that his enemies tried to wear him out with journeys and expenses; and that, as he and his fellow-exiles had but three horses at their disposal, he was obliged to ask for another week, besides the ten days' warning which the Legates gave him. At this slight delay, King Henry, it would be hard to say why, took offence. When King Louis learned the straits to which the Archbishop was reduced, he amply provided him with means to travel with his fellow-exiles to the appointed place of conference. "God in the richness of His mercy reward him," wrote St. Thomas to the Pope.

At the interview, which was held at Les Planches on the 18th of November, 1167, the Legates were attended only by the Archbishop of Rouen, the King of England having kept about him such of the English Bishops as he had summoned, who were all St. Thomas's greatest enemies,—the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of London, Chichester, and Salisbury, with, for appearance' sake, the Bishop of Worcester. Many, however, of lower rank represented the King's interest at the conference. v. 5.

St. Thomas was accompanied by John of Salisbury, Herbert of Bosham, Lombard of Piacenza, Alexander the Welshman, Geoffrey prior and Guarin canon of Pentney, Robert and Gilbert canons, the two last named being the Archbishop's chaplains, John the Cantor, Alan, Richard, Henry and many others.

We have the fullest accounts of all that passed, as both parties sent their reports to the Pope, and John of Salisbury has recorded the transactions in two documents.<sup>4</sup> The Legates opened conference by dwelling at some length on the charity of the Pope and their own anxiety for peace and for the safety of the Archbishop of Canterbury and his companions. They then spoke of the difficulties of their journey, which had been very long. They had left Rome in the middle of March,<sup>5</sup> and it was November when they reached Normandy. They then approached the matter before them by enlarging on the greatness of the King of England, his inflexibility, the badness of the times, the necessities of the Church, which, in every part of the world but France, was beset with enemies. They spoke, too, of the many favours the King in times past had delighted to heap upon the Saint; and they recounted the wrongs of which Henry now complained. Amongst the latter he reckoned the war which had broken out between himself and both the King of France and the Earl of Flanders, which he attributed to St. Thomas. They ended by asking his advice how they might themselves hope to recover the favour of the King, whose displeasure they had incurred when he found that their powers were not as extensive as John of Oxford had led him to expect. "With-

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. pp. 281, 245, 256, 261.

<sup>5</sup> The Bishop of Poitiers had been told by John Cumin and Ralph of Tamworth that they left Rome on the 1st of January, 1167 (*Materials*, vi. pp. 123, 147).



out much humility and moderation," they said, with the view, it was thought, either of frightening or provoking the Archbishop, "and without showing so great a prince very much honour, they would not be able to appease his indignation or find a remedy for so many dangers."

St. Thomas rose, and with great calmness, yet with his eyes sparkling and the colour in his face, addressed the Legates in Latin with fluency and elegance. He opened his reply by thanking themselves and the Pope for the interest they took in him and his fellow-exiles. He answered their address point by point, showing the groundlessness of the King's complaints and exposing the wrongs of the Church. With regard to the war, in order to deprive such reports of any colour of probability, for a long time past he had purposely abstained from all personal intercourse with the King of France, the only recent instance being the interview in which he had obtained a safe-conduct for the Legates at their request. This matter was further confirmed the next day by the appearance of King Louis in person before the Legates; and he there asserted on oath that the Archbishop of Canterbury had always counselled peace, on such terms as should secure the honour of the two Kings and the tranquillity of their people.

St. Thomas expressed himself as ready to show to the King all such humility and loyal obedience as was consistent with the honour of God and the Apostolic See, the liberty of the Church, the dignity of his office, and the preservation of

Church property; and, if this seemed too much or too little, he promised to be guided by the advice of the Legates, as far as his circumstances and profession permitted. The Legates replied that they had not come to give him counsel, but to take counsel with him and to promote a reconciliation.

William of Pavia then asked whether, "inasmuch as we are not better than our fathers," the Saint would not in their presence promise to observe to King Henry whatever customs his predecessors had observed to former kings. All questions would then be at an end, and he might return to his see in peace. The Archbishop's answer was that none of his predecessors had ever been forced to make such a promise to any king; and as for himself, by God's help he would never promise to observe customs that were clearly contrary to the laws of God, that overthrew the rights of the Holy See, and destroyed the liberty of the Church. In the presence of the Cardinals themselves and of many others the Pope at Sens had condemned these customs, and had absolved the Archbishop from his promise, and the Saint added that the Pope had then used an expression worthy of his apostolic office, which please God he would never forget, that he should have bent his neck to the executioner sooner than have given consent to such wickedness and for temporal advantages or for the love of life have abandoned his priestly duty. The Constitutions of Clarendon that had been condemned were then read, and

St. Thomas asked the Legates whether a priest could observe them without perilling his order and his salvation. The Cardinal of Pavia recommended the Saint to resign his see; which, St. Thomas answered, would be to abandon the cause of the Church. He also refused to return to Canterbury without anything being said on either side of the subjects in dispute, quoting the English proverb, "Silence gives consent."

They then proceeded to ask, whether the Saint would submit to their judgment as to the points in dispute between himself and the King. The question placed him in the dilemma of submitting to an arbitrator like the Cardinal William of Pavia, whom he knew to be a partisan of the King's, or of refusing an arbitration in what might seem a factious manner. His answer was, that before any such arbitration should take place, restitution must first be made of all the Church property which had been unjustly taken away; and that then he would be prepared to submit to the judgment of any one whom his Holiness might appoint.

The Legates finally asked the Archbishop if, in case of another appeal being made by the Bishops, he would consent to their hearing evidence upon it, and adjudging it. The Saint had already heard a rumour of the nature of this appeal, which it was proposed to make in the name of the Bishops of England. As he was aware, but a very few were assembled at Rouen, and most of the other Bishops knew nothing of it; while of those who did know of it, many dis-

approved it, as being rather an evasion than an appeal. For these reasons he answered, that he had received no instructions from the Pope upon the subject; but that on receiving them, he would return such an answer as he might judge reasonable. In conclusion, the poverty of himself and his friends disabled them from undertaking law-suits and expensive journeys; nor would he consent to encroach on the bounty of the King of France by asking him to maintain them in other men's houses. The Archbishop parted from the Legates with mutual expressions of good-will.

The Cardinals<sup>6</sup> now returned to the King. On the Thursday after the interview, they arrived at the monastery of Bec; the day after, at Lisieux; the third day, at St. Pierre-sur-Dives; the fourth day, that is, the Sunday before Advent, they passed through Argentan. The King came out two leagues to meet them; and welcoming them cordially, attended each to his lodgings.

The day following, that is, Monday, the 27th of November, early in the morning, after Mass, they were invited to attend the King, and entered the council-chamber with the Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots who had admission. On their reappearance, after a space of about two hours, the King came out as far as the outer door of the chapel, and there said publicly in the hearing of the Legates, "I trust my eyes may never light upon another Cardinal." In such haste was he to get quit of them, that, though

<sup>6</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 269.

their house was at no great distance, he would not await the arrival of their horses, but mounted them upon the first that could be found near the chapel. Thus the Cardinals took their departure, with four attendants at the most.

The Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots stayed with the King, and re-entered the council-chamber, where they remained till evening. After this, they visited the Cardinals, all in evident confusion; then, after remaining some time, they returned to their houses. The day following they were closeted with the King till twelve o'clock; then visited the Cardinals; then returned to the King, and again to the Cardinals, carrying secret messages backwards and forwards. The day after, that is, the vigil of St. Andrew, the King rose at daybreak, and went out to hunt and hawk, so that it was surmised that he absented himself on purpose. Very early the Bishops met at the chapel-royal, and adjourned to the council-chamber; here they deliberated in the King's absence, and then withdrew to the church, near which the Cardinals lodged.

When the Cardinals had taken their seats to hear what was proposed, and the others were arranged on each side, the Archbishops of Rouen and York, the Bishops of Worcester, Salisbury, Bayeux, London, Chichester, and Angoulême, with very many Abbots, and a great multitude both of clergy and laity, at length the Bishop of London rose, his pointless and inelegant oration sufficiently evincing the troubled state of his mind. He opened it as follows:

“Your lordships have heard that letters were brought to us from his Holiness the Pope, which we have now in our hands, in which his Holiness signified to us, that on receiving your summons we should come to meet you, for that your lordships were intrusted with full powers to decide the cause now pending between his lordship the King and my lord of Canterbury, and also that between the Bishops of England and the same Archbishop.

“In consequence, as soon as we heard of your arrival in these parts, we hastened to meet you, ready to abide by your decision, and to take our parts as well in accusation as defence. In like manner, my lord the King is prepared to ratify any sentence which you may pronounce respecting himself and his lordship of Canterbury. Since, then, no impediment is raised on the part either of the King or of your lordships or of ourselves, to thwart his Holiness’s instructions, let the blame rest where it is due.

“But because, with his accustomed precipitation, the Archbishop strikes before he threatens, suspends and excommunicates before he admonishes, for this reason we anticipate his headlong sentence by an appeal. We have appealed already before this, and we renew our appeal now; and in this appeal all England includes itself.”

He then spoke of the claim raised by the King for the sum of forty-four thousand marks on account of revenues which passed into St. Thomas’s hands as Chancellor; and he was witty at the Saint’s expense, saying, that he apparently believed

that promotion remitted debts, as baptism does sins. He proceeded to the danger of a schism, in case of severe measures against the King; and he complained that the Archbishop defamed the King respecting the statutes of Clarendon, protesting publicly that the King would relax the statute which forbade appeals; that it was only for the sake of the poorer clergy that he had enacted it, and now that they were ungrateful for it, he would annul it; and that if the cause was civil, they should contend before a civil judge; if ecclesiastical, they might choose their own court, and contend as they would.

Lastly, he said that St. Thomas imposed unfair burdens upon him, commanding him to disperse his briefs through England, and that forty couriers were not enough for this; and, as a further grievance, that he had withdrawn from his jurisdiction nearly sixty churches, on the ground that they had formerly paid rents to Holy Trinity or St. Augustine's; and that he had his Dean<sup>7</sup> in the City of London to judge the causes of these exempt churches, and thus undermined the authority of the Bishop, who was in this manner more aggrieved than any other Bishop.

The Legates stated that they had no powers to act as judges over the Archbishop, but only as mediators: on which, the Bishops named St. Martin's in the following year as the term of their appeal, that is, November 11th, 1168. The Bishop of Salisbury joined in the appeal,

<sup>7</sup> This official of the Archbishop is the well known Dean of the Arches.

in his own name and that of the Bishop of Winchester. A cleric of Geoffrey Ridel, Archdeacon of Canterbury, appealed in the name of his master; so, probably to ingratiate himself with the King, did one of the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, who had been sent to the court to implore Henry's protection against the exactions of the infamous Randulf de Broc. This monk had at the same time another commission. Prior Wibert had died September 27, 1167, and the Convent of Christ Church now sent to the King about the appointment of a new prior. John of Salisbury wrote<sup>8</sup> to reproach the monks for their disloyalty to their Archbishop, and said that those who heard their representative join in the appeal of the Bishops, scoffed at him, saying that it was almost hereditary for the monks of Canterbury to hate their Archbishop. "They had been no comfort to Anselm when twice exiled for justice sake. They had despised Ralph, hated William, set snares for Theobald, and now for no reason they persecuted Thomas."

When the conference was over, the Cardinals sent two messengers to St. Thomas, who, on the day after the feast of St. Lucy, December 14th, delivered to him letters<sup>9</sup> prohibiting him, in the Pope's name and their own, from issuing any excommunication or interdict until the Pope had been consulted.

The Bishops also sent two messengers, Walter, precentor of Salisbury, and Master Jocelin, chancellor of Chichester, to announce the appeal, and

<sup>8</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 301.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 284, 277.



renew it in the Archbishop's presence; but he would not give them a hearing; first, because one of the Bishops was London, whom he regarded as excommunicate, and had denounced as such to the Cardinals; secondly, because they had held communion with excommunicates whose absolution had been fraudulent.

The Archbishop wrote back to the Cardinals, that he well knew, and that they could not be ignorant, how far their commands were binding on him; and that by God's grace he should act as he thought most for the interest of the Church. He sent them also a verbal message by their messengers and his own, finding fault with their conduct for manifold and obvious causes. Likewise he called on them to fulfil the Pope's instructions about the excommunicates, either urging them to satisfaction, or replacing them under sentence.

The Cardinals left the King on the same Tuesday after Vespers. On their departure, the King entreated them most humbly that they would intercede with the Pope to rid him of St. Thomas altogether. In asking this, he shed tears in the presence of the Cardinals and others. William of Pavia seemed to weep too; but Cardinal Otho could scarcely conceal his amusement.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

“MEANWHILE.”

1168.

Absolutions of excommunicated persons—proposed translation of St. Thomas—messengers to the Pope from both sides—conferences between the two Kings at Nantes—John of Salisbury, Herbert of Bosham and Philip of Calne have interviews with King Henry—the Pope suspends the Saint's powers—St. Thomas expostulates with the Pope.

THE departure of the Cardinals left matters balanced much as they were before their arrival, although eventually their commission resulted in the most serious reverse St. Thomas experienced. He had now cause of complaint to the Pope, that the Legates had, as far as their power went, suspended him from all authority. On the other hand, the King was apparently not unwilling to give up the two most obnoxious articles of Clarendon: that which prevented appeals to the Pope, and that which required the clergy to plead in the secular courts, even in ecclesiastical causes. The Cardinals, however, still continuing in the neighbourhood, application was made to them for absolution by persons, who, after being excommunicated by St. Thomas, had been absolved in England. This absolution had been principally obtained from the Bishop of Llandaff, on John of

Oxford's return from Rome, in virtue of a fraudulent interpretation of the powers sent by the Pope in favour of those who were in peril of death, and who should make oath to obey the orders of the Holy See on their recovery. All parties now regarding these absolutions as invalid, the Cardinals William and Otho issued<sup>1</sup> orders to the Bishops of Norwich and Chichester to repeat them after a similar oath. The Pope,<sup>2</sup> who had been informed by St. Thomas of what had taken place, ordered them to replace the censure, unless the parties should at once make restitution of the Church property they had usurped. This letter was sent<sup>3</sup> to the Legates by St. Thomas, first, copies by a canon regular of St. John's, and then the originals by Osbert, a subdeacon of the Holy See; but the Cardinals said that the Church revenues had been received by the King's mandate and authority, and therefore that, as long as they were in his territory, it was impossible to do justice on the usurpers. Cardinal Otho was now plainly either over-persuaded by his colleague, or over-awed by the King, for the present proceedings are inexcusable.

With regard to the proposal of William of Pavia, that the Saint should be translated to another see, which had been taken up in some quarters rather warmly, and amongst others, to St. Thomas's great mortification, by the Bishop of Worcester, he wrote in these striking terms: "We wish our lord the Pope and our other

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 311.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 315.

friends to know, and do you take care to impress it upon them, that sooner than suffer ourself to be torn from our Mother the Church of Canterbury, which has nourished and raised us to our present station, God the inspector of hearts knoweth we would consent to be slaughtered. Let them waste no labour on such a prospect, for there is no calamity which we would not prefer to that. You may inform them also, that if every other grievance were removed, yet so long as that man retains the possession of our own or any other church in his dominions, we would rather die any death than basely live and suffer him to enjoy them with impunity.” In a letter<sup>4</sup> written not very long before, the Saint had represented to the Pope that the King held in his own hands no less than seven vacant bishoprics in the two provinces of Canterbury and Rouen. ✓

Meanwhile messengers on both sides were constantly going to and from Benevento, where the Pope was. To use Herbert's graphic words, “The threshold of the Apostles was worn by our messengers and by our adversaries: both parties run to and fro, hurry and bustle. Some of both die on the way, but others succeed them, and on both sides the number increases. And to speak of our own people only, the multitude of our fellow-exiles afforded us such a supply of messengers, that it seemed as if God had permitted so many to be banished for our advantage. Here was a poor Archbishop and his ragged and wretched fellow-exiles showing a brave resistance

<sup>4</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 253.

to citizens and kings, to cardinals and persons of wealth ; and I then at least learned that gold and silver cannot be brought into comparison with a man of learning and energy, let him be as poor as he may."

John of Salisbury, in May 1168, wrote the following account<sup>s</sup> of the proceedings at Benevento to the Bishop of Exeter, with whom he kept up an active and friendly correspondence : " Both parties were courteously received ; but the King's envoys, as their cause was worse, so their pomp and ostentation was greater ; and when they found that they could not move his lordship the Pope by flattery or promises, they had recourse to threats ; intimating that the King would follow the errors of Nouredin, and enter into communion with a profane religion, sooner than allow Thomas to act any longer as Bishop in the Church of Canterbury. But the man of God could not be shaken by terror any more than seduced by flattery. He set before them the alternative of life and death, and said that, though he could not prevent their choosing the way of those that perish, despising the grace and patience of God, yet by the grace of God, for his part, he would not recede from the right way. Their spirit then quickly subsided ; and, as they perceived that they could not make any progress this way against justice, they sent envoys to the King of Sicily, with the King's letters which they had brought as their credentials, in the hope that the King and Queen of Sicily might

<sup>s</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 406.

aid them in obtaining something from his lordship the Pope to the prejudice of the Church. But his most Christian Majesty the King of the French, presaging this wicked policy, had written to the Archbishop elect of Palermo, identifying himself with the cause of the Church and of the Archbishop of Canterbury. What has been the success of either party is as yet unknown. In the mean time messengers arrived from the Legates whom the King of England had procured from the Pope, but did not at all agree in their accounts; for whatever one said in the Pope's Court, the other unsaid. But there is nothing certain known about these either, as to the answers they will bring back to their respective masters. Supplication was made to the Pope, on the part of the King and the Legates, backed with other interest, in behalf of the Bishop of Salisbury; and at length it was conceded that the Pontiff would pardon him his offence, and write to his lordship of Canterbury, requesting and counselling him to take off the sentence of suspension, and to receive him back into his favour and affection, on condition that he gives security in his own person, and sends two of the principal clerics of his church, the Dean being excepted, to make oath that the Bishop has ordered them, and not afterwards revoked the order, to swear in his name and stead that he will make satisfaction to the Archbishop for his contumacy and misconduct. From this it may be surmised that the Pope was either ignorant of the sentence of the legates, by which they absolved the aforesaid

Bishop, or that he did not think fit to ratify it. The same Bishop had before obtained letters nearly to the same effect, which, however, did not impose upon him the oath ; but these he did not think fit to use, either because they were displeasing to the King, or else that they were not considered sufficient. What award each party would bring back was unknown, when the bearer of the aforesaid letters returned ; but his lordship the Pope has written to his most Christian Majesty that he will not fail the Church of God nor his friend of Canterbury, whenever he can uphold him with justice.”

Various conferences were now held between the principal nobles of both kingdoms, and finally between the two Kings of England and France, at Mantes, on the 12th of May, the Sunday after the Ascension, with a view to promote peace. Probably about this time, though it may very possibly have happened in one of the previous years,<sup>6</sup> an effort was made by the intercession of King Louis to reconcile some of the Archbishop's followers to King Henry, that so the revenues of their benefices, of which they stood in great need, might be restored to them. Henry gave them a safe-conduct for going and coming to and from Angers, where he had spent Easter. On Low Sunday the King gave them audience. The

<sup>6</sup> Canon Robertson assigns it to 1166, in which case the date of Low Sunday would be May 1. Fitzstephen places it after the events of 1169, but he has placed the excommunications of 1169 before the conference at Les Planches in 1167, so that his order of events cannot be relied on (*Materials*, iii. p. 98).

first who was introduced was John of Salisbury, who, after saluting the King, begged for a peaceable restitution of his benefices, as he had never wilfully offended him, but was ever ready to be faithful and loyal to him, as his earthly lord, saving his order. On the King's part it was answered him, that he was born in the King's dominions, that his relations there had their subsistence, and that there he himself had risen to riches and station: therefore, as a subject of the King, he ought to have been faithful to him against the Archbishop and every one else. An oath was then proposed to him, that he would be faithful to the King in life and limb, and in preserving his earthly honour against all men; and expressly that he would lawfully keep his written customs and royal dignities, let the Pope, or the Archbishop, or his own Bishop, do what they might. He replied, that he had been brought up from his youth by the Church of Canterbury, that he was sworn to the obedience of the Pope and of his Archbishop, and that he could not desert them, nor could he promise to observe the customs; but he was willing to pledge himself to receive whatever the Pope and the Archbishop received, and to reject what they rejected. This did not satisfy the King, so he received orders to leave. This unsuccessful visit, John of Salisbury afterwards complained, cost him thirteen pounds and two horses, which he could ill afford. He had previously consented to leave the Court of the Archbishop, but he had constantly refused the terms that were now offered to him.



Master Herbert of Bosham was called for, and entered. The King said to those near him, "Now we shall see a specimen of pride." Tall and striking in person, he had on a dress peculiarly calculated to set it off; a tunic, and above it a mantle of the green cloth of Auxerre hanging over his shoulders, and reaching, after the German fashion, to his ankles. After the usual salutation, he took his seat; was interrogated in the same manner with John, and made for the most part the same answers. On mention of loyalty and the Archbishop, he said that the Archbishop above all men was most especially loyal, for that he had not suffered his majesty to go astray unwarned. Of the customs he said as John had, and added that he wondered the King had put them in writing. "For in other kingdoms likewise there are evil customs against the Church; but they are not written, and for this reason there is hope, by God's grace, that they may become disused."

The King, wishing to take him in his words, asked, "And what are the evil customs in the kingdom of our lord the King of France?"

*Herbert.* "The exaction of toll and passage from the clergy and pilgrims. Again, when a Bishop dies, all his movable goods, even the doors and windows of his house, become the King's. So, in the realm of the King of the Germans, though these and similar evil customs exist, they are not written."

*The King.* "Why do you not call him by his proper title, the Emperor of Germany?"

*Herbert.* “His title is King of Germany; and when he styles himself Emperor, it is ‘Emperor of the Romans, the ever-august.’”

*The King.* “This is abominable. Is this son of a priest to disturb my kingdom and disquiet my peace?”

*Herbert.* “It is not I that do it; nor, again, am I the son of a priest, as I was born before my father entered orders; nor is he a King’s son, whose father was no King when he begat him.”

Here Jordan Tarsun, one of the barons sitting by, said, “Whosoever son he is, I would give half my barony he were mine.” This speech made the King angry, but he said nothing. After a little he dismissed Herbert, who withdrew.

Philip of Calne, entered next. He was by birth a Londoner, and for two years before the Archbishop’s exile he had studied in the Holy Scriptures at Tours,<sup>7</sup> at which place he had also taught law. He was a man of great reading and very eloquent, but in poor health, and on this account he had not accompanied the Archbishop, nor had he been sent to Rome, nor mixed up in proceedings against the King. All this was explained to Henry, and he had influential advocates, who reported to his majesty that he had said, when he heard that his property in England had been confiscated on the Arch-

<sup>7</sup> Tours is probably a mistake of Fitzstephen’s for Rheims. Philip was recommended by St. Thomas to Fulk Dean of Rheims, whom the Saint afterwards thanks for his kindness to him. John of Salisbury speaks of Philip as living at Rheims (*Materials*, v. pp. 166, 258, 422).

bishop's account, "Good God, what does our good King look for from me?" The King was anxious not to seem to have granted nothing graciously, so he remitted the oath which had been proposed to the others, and restored Philip to his favour and to his possessions. He then rose, and turned to other business.

If it was in this year, 1168, that this attempt was made to restore the Archbishop's followers to Henry's favour, its resumption was rendered impossible by the news which reached the King from the Pope in the middle of the summer. His envoys—Clarembald, the Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's, whom, it will be remembered, St. Thomas had refused to bless as abbot several years before; Reginald, Archdeacon of Salisbury; Simon de la Chartre, and Henry of Northampton—had unexpectedly returned with letters from the Pope, not only confirming the prohibition placed upon St. Thomas by the Legates, which was a virtual suspension, but actually suspending the Archbishop by his Apostolic authority. It was conveyed to the King in these words:<sup>8</sup> "We, however, are unable to forget our fatherly affection for your person, but wish in all things, as far as duty will permit, to honour and attend to you as a Catholic Prince and most Christian King; and in the sure hope and belief that your discreet prudence will perceive how in the things of God and those which pertain to the Church, it is more glorious to be conquered than to conquer; and confiding that He, in whose hands

<sup>8</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 377.

are the hearts of kings, will deign to mitigate your indignation, we have laid our commands on the Archbishop, and altogether inhibited him from attempting, on any account, to put forth either against yourself, or your land, or the nobles of your realm, any sentence of interdict or excommunication, until you take him back into your favour, and he is reconciled to you, or from presuming in any matter to aggrieve you.

“And since it is certain that those letters, which we last addressed to your magnificence by your envoys, a year ago, are for the future without force; if, in the meantime, the aforesaid Archbishop shall in any matter presume to aggrieve yourself or the nobles of your realm, you are at liberty to show these present letters in attestation of our pleasure, and to demonstrate that you and yours are beyond the reach of his attacks.”

If the Holy Father thought that an appeal to the King's generosity or honour was likely to be successful, when he pointed out to him that “it was more glorious to be conquered than to conquer,” he must have been sadly disappointed. He published the letter as widely as he could, sending it to all the churches and dignitaries of both kingdoms; although the Pope only gave him liberty to do so, “*if* the Archbishop should aggrieve him;” and although his envoys had sworn that it should be kept secret, and the Pope had commanded them so to keep it, in virtue of their obedience and under peril of an

anathema; so that Master Geoffrey, one of the clerics of the Cardinal, William of Pavia, openly protested "that they had perjured themselves and incurred an anathema."

The Pope had never been suspected for a moment of being moved by any inferior motive; but the King was so elated with this his triumph, that he could not refrain from naming those of the Cardinals who had accepted his gold, and those personages who were his agents in dispensing bribes. John of Salisbury wrote to Master Lombard, who was with the Pope, "Would that my lords the Cardinals were within hearing of the French; among whom it has become a proverb, that the princes of the Church are faithless and companions of thieves—*Ecclesiæ principes infideles, socii furum*,<sup>9</sup> for they authorize the plunder of Christ's patrimony, to share in it themselves." The same writer also says to the Bishop of Poitiers, "The King himself told the Bishop of Worcester, that he and the other Bishops were exempted from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop; and bade them fear no threats, for that he had his lordship the Pope and all the Cardinals in his purse. So elated is he, that he boasts openly of having at last obtained the prerogatives of his grandfather, who was, in his own realms, at once apostolic legate, patriarch, and emperor, and whatever else he chose."

The letter<sup>10</sup> of the Holy Father to St. Thomas

<sup>9</sup> "Thy princes are faithless, companions of thieves: they all love bribes, and run after rewards" (Isaias i. 23).

<sup>10</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 421.

announcing the step he had taken, is dated Benevento, the 19th of May, 1168. It differs in a material point from that sent to the King. In the latter the suspension ran, "until you take him back into your favour, and he is reconciled to you;" in that to the Archbishop it was, that his powers were suspended, until he should receive other apostolic letters to empower him to act, which were promised, if peace had not been arranged before the beginning of next Lent. The Pope had always confided much in the reality of the promises of reconciliation so freely made by the King of England's envoys; and he probably thought that the step he was now taking would have the desired result, and at once end the suspension of the Archbishop.

The following<sup>11</sup> was St. Thomas's expostulation with the Pope on what was by far the hardest trial he had yet had to bear:

"O my father, my soul is in bitterness; the letters by which your Holiness was pleased to suspend me have made myself and my unhappy fellow-exiles a very scorn of men and outcast of the people, and, what grieves me worse, have delivered up God's Church to the will of its enemies.

"Our persecutor had held out sure hopes to the Count of Flanders, and others of the French nobility, that he meant to make peace with us; but his messengers arrived with new powers from your Holiness, and all was at an end. What could our friends do for us when thus repulsed by

<sup>11</sup> Ep. S. Tho. i. p. 51; Froude's *Remains*, p. 348.

your Holiness's act, and smitten down as with the club of Hercules?

"Would that your Holiness's ear could hear what is said of this matter by the Bishops, nobles, and commons of both realms, and that your eye could see the scandal with which it has filled the French Court. What is there that this man may not now look for, when, through agents famous only for their crimes, he has circumvented those who have the key of knowledge, overthrown the ministers of justice, and seared the majesty of the Apostolic See? This King, whose sole hope rests on the chance of your Holiness's death or mine, has obtained the very thing he wishes,—a fresh delay, in which one or other of those events might happen. God avert them!

"But your Holiness counsels me to bear with patience the *meanwhile*. And do you not observe, O father, what this *meanwhile* may bring about, to the injury of the Church and of your Holiness's reputation? *Meanwhile*, he applies to his own purposes the revenues of the vacant abbeys and bishoprics, and will not suffer pastors to be ordained there; *meanwhile*, he riots in uncontrolled insolence against the parishes, churches, holy places, and the whole sacred order; *meanwhile*, he and the other persecutors of the Church make their will their law; *meanwhile*, who is to take charge of the sheep of Christ, and save them from the jaws of wolves, who no longer prowl around, but have entered the fold, and devour and tear and slay, with none to resist

them? For what pastor is there whose voice you have not silenced, and what Bishop have you not suspended in suspending me?

“This act of your Holiness is alike unexampled and unmerited, and will do the work of tyrants in other days as well as yours. Your Holiness has set an example ready to their hands; and doubtless this man and his posterity, unless your Holiness takes steps to order it otherwise, will draw it into a precedent. He and his nobles, whatever be their crime, will claim, among the privileges of the realm, exemption from any sentence of excommunication or interdict till authorized by the Apostolic See; then, in time, when the evil has taken root, neither will the Supreme Pontiff himself find any in the whole kingdom to take part with him against the King and his princes.”

There is yet another passage of this magnificent example of apostolic liberty which must be given, notwithstanding its length, as it is valuable for the instances which it recites of royal tyranny and usurpation.

“Some may say, perhaps, that it was out of hatred to myself personally, that the customs were introduced. But in truth, from the very day of the King’s accession to power, he took up the persecution of the Church, as if it were an heirloom. Was I Archbishop when his father prohibited the envoys of the blessed Eugenius from setting foot on his territory? Was I Archbishop when Gregory, Cardinal Deacon of St. Angelo, foreseeing this man’s tyranny, persuaded my lord



Eugenius to permit<sup>12</sup> the coronation of Eustace, King Stephen's son, saying that a ram was more easily held by the horns than a lion by the tail? Your Holiness will recollect this history, and likewise the letters which were then procured by him who is now at York, and joins the King in my persecution, yea, aims at overthrowing the Church's liberty. Was I Archbishop when, taking offence at an appeal, the King transferred the Church of Bosham to the Bishop of Lisieux, who by his rhetoric and his flatteries still holds it,<sup>13</sup> to the injury of the Church of Exeter? And what success had the Bishop of Chichester against the Abbot of Battle;<sup>14</sup> when, on his daring to speak before the Court of apostolic privileges, and to denounce the Abbot excommunicate, he was forthwith compelled to communicate with him in the face of all present, without even the form of absolution, and to receive him to the kiss of peace? For such was the King's pleasure and that of the Court, which dared not to oppose his will in anything. And this, most Holy Father, happened in the time of your Holiness's predecessor as well as of mine.

“And now, let those who attribute all this to

<sup>12</sup> “Ut Eustachium coronari *non* permetteret,” by an evident error in Dr. Giles' edition. This letter has not yet appeared in the Rolls Series.

<sup>13</sup> When Henry, after the martyrdom, left Normandy on his way to Ireland, to escape the Legates, Bartholomew Bishop of Exeter crossed the Severn, and finding him at Pembroke, asked and obtained the restoration of Bosham to the see of Exeter (Girald. Cambrensis, *Angl. Sacr.* p. 427).

<sup>14</sup> See Note D.

hatred of myself, name, if they can, any instance in this man's time, in which the authority of the See of Rome has availed any single person in his realm, so as to procure justice against himself or his favourites. Truly I can recollect none; though I could name many whom his hatred of the See of Rome has brought into jeopardy.

“Achard, Abbot of St. Victor's, was elected Bishop of Séez. What prevented his consecration, except that his election had been confirmed by Pope Adrian? And why did the King consent afterwards to his being made Bishop of Avanches, except that no election had preceded his own choice? Froger too, in like manner, was not elected to the see of Séez, but intruded into it: and all this before my promotion.

“And yet I doubt not that this struggle for the Church's liberty would long ago have been brought to a close, unless his wilfulness, not to use a harsher term, had found patrons in the Church of Rome. God requite them as is best for His Church and for themselves. The Almighty, All-just Lord God judge between them and me. Little should I have needed their patronage, if I had chosen to forsake the Church and yield to his wilfulness myself. I might have flourished in wealth and abundance of delicacies; I might have been feared, courted, honoured, and might have provided for my own in luxury and worldly glory, as I pleased. But because God called me to the government of His Church, an unworthy sinner as I was, and most wretched, though flourishing in the world's goods beyond

all my countrymen, through His grace preventing and assisting me, I chose rather to be an outcast from the palace, to be exiled, proscribed, and to finish my life in the last wretchedness, than to sell the Church's liberty, and to prefer the iniquitous traditions of men to the law of God.

"Such a course be for those who promise themselves many days, and in the consciousness of their deserts expect better times. For myself, I know that my own days are few; and that unless I declare to the wicked man his ways, his blood will shortly be required at my hands, by One from whom no patronage can protect me. There silver and gold will be profitless, and gifts that blind the eyes of wise ones.

"We shall soon stand all of us before the tribunal of Christ, and by His majesty and terrible judgment I conjure your Holiness, as my father and lord, and as the supreme judge on earth, to render justice to His Church and to myself, against those who seek my life to take it away."

Surely these last two paragraphs were penned by the Saint when the revelation of his coming martyrdom was vividly before his mind, as was doubtless also the conclusion of a letter<sup>15</sup> to the Bishop of Hereford, written probably about the time he left Pontigny, in which he thus speaks: "Now to end all as it ought to be ended, since the Lord has shown us what and how great

<sup>15</sup> "Quoniam ostendit nobis Dominus quæ et quanta oporteat nos pati pro nomine suo et defensione Ecclesiæ" (*Materials*, v. p. 456).

things we have to suffer for His Name's sake and for the defence of His Church, we have need that you, and the Church committed to your care, should pray without ceasing for us; that where by our merits we fail, we may by your prayers and by those of the saints under your rule be able to endure, and thus deserve to obtain grace everlasting.”

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE KINGS.

1169.

The Cardinal Legates recalled—a new embassy from the Pope—meeting between the Kings of England and France near Montmirail—St. Thomas invited to the conference—he stands firm, while his own followers and King Louis turn against him—the people praise him—he refuses a second conference—the Kings meet again—the Pope restores St. Thomas's powers—King Louis again becomes his friend.

THE remonstrances which St. Thomas thought it right to address to the Pope were accompanied by letters<sup>1</sup> in a similar strain from the King and Queen of France and from other influential personages. The result was a renewal of the assurance on the Pope's part,<sup>2</sup> that, at the time named, St. Thomas should be left free to exercise his powers against the King.<sup>3</sup> The Cardinals were recalled; and they left, not without some sense that the cause of the Church had sadly suffered in their hands. In a final interview with King Henry, Cardinal Otho strongly pressed upon him the duty of restoring the Archbishop. His reply

<sup>1</sup> *Materials*, p. 460, 462, 464, 468.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 484.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 480.

was, that as to the customs, he and his children would be content to claim only those which a hundred men from England, a hundred from Normandy, a hundred from Anjou, and so from his other dominions, would prove on oath to have been claimed by his predecessors. Or, if this condition displeased the Archbishop, he said he was willing to abide by the judgment of three Bishops from England, and three from his continental dominions, naming Rouen, Bayeux, and Le Mans. Or, if this were not enough, he would submit to the arbitration of his lordship the Pope, but only for himself and not for his heirs. He refused, however, to make any restitution whatever of the property of the Archbishop and his friends. The Cardinals were glad to leave King Henry's dominions; for the time was running rapidly on, and they were much afraid lest, if Lent came, and St. Thomas then passed some spiritual sentence upon the King, their own persons might not be safe.

The Holy Father had received such strong assurances from Henry that he was about to be reconciled to St. Thomas, both under his own hand and by his envoys, that he had regarded it as certain to take place shortly, and accordingly he had given it in the first instance as the period of the suspension of the Saint's powers. As the Lent was now approaching which he had defined as the term to St. Thomas, he thought it might be productive of good to send an embassy to the King. Accordingly, Simon prior of Montdieu, Engelbert prior of Val de St. Pierre, and Bernard

“Have mercy on me, O my lord ; for I throw myself on God and your majesty, for God’s honour and yours.” King Henry had only been anxious for a reconciliation with the Archbishop as long as he thought it would promote his treaty with the King of France, so he at once took offence at the phrase touching the honour of God, which had been introduced. He began to speak in a contumelious and insulting manner to the Saint, saying, amongst other things, that while he was Chancellor he had received oaths of homage and fealty from all sorts of persons on both sides of the Channel, that he might supplant his King and become lord of all. The Saint began to reply ; but Henry interrupted him, and turning to Louis said, “My lord, see how foolishly and how proudly this man deserted his Church, for he ran away by night, though neither I nor any one else drove him out of the kingdom. And now he persuades you that his is the cause of the Church, and that he suffers for justice sake, and thus he has deceived many great people. Now, my lord the King, and holy men and princes who are present, I ask for nothing from the Archbishop, but that he should keep those customs which his five immediate predecessors (some of whom are Saints and are famed for miracles) all observed to mine, and to which he himself has assented : let him again, in your presence, as a priest and a bishop, pledge himself to these without any subterfuge. The sole cause of dissension between us is, that he infringes them, and that at Vezelay, that famous place, on

a high festival, he has condemned some of them, and excommunicated those who observe them."

This speech produced a great effect. Some people called out, "The King humbles himself enough." The Archbishop was silent for a while, when Louis said, in a way which delighted the friends of the King of England, "My lord Archbishop, do you wish to be more than a saint? Or better than Peter? Why do you doubt? Here is peace at hand." St. Thomas replied: "It is true that my predecessors were better and greater than I, each in their time, and although they did not uproot every thing that lifted itself against God, yet they did destroy some things. And if any of them exceeded or fell short in any thing, in such a matter they set us no example. We blame Peter for denying Christ, but we praise him for risking his life in opposing Nero. Our fathers have suffered because they would not withhold the Name of Christ; and shall I, to recover a man's favour, suppress Christ's honour?" "This phrase," King Henry said, "I will never receive, lest the Archbishop should seem to wish to save God's honour, and not I, who desire it still more." St. Thomas reminded the King that the oath of fealty contained the clause, "saving my order;" on which he rose in anger, and withdrew. The Pope's envoys followed him, being bound to serve upon him other letters of the Pope of a severer character, in case the reconciliation were not effected; but they postponed it when the King began to say to them that on their counsel he



would do what he had avoided in the conference, lest it should not seem a free act on his part. He promised that if they could induce the Archbishop to swear to the customs, he would correct anything that might seem harsh and intolerable in them, by the advice of religious men whom he would summon. He also boasted with an oath that there was no Church in the world which had such liberty and peace, and that there was no clergy in such honour as those in his dominions, though a more impure and wicked set did not exist; being for the most part sacrilegious, adulterous, highwaymen, thieves, men guilty of rape, arson, and homicide: and for every lie he found a witness amongst the clergy and laity about him.

On this they went to the Archbishop, whom they found surrounded by French, English, Normans, Bretons, and Poitevins, whom they joined in praying him to consent to omit the vital clause. "Why," they urged, "should we be better than our fathers?" The Saint replied, that the blessed Anselm was the only one of them who had been urged to profess the customs, and he had been driven into exile. At length they left St. Thomas, and told the Kings of his firmness, which was called obstinacy; after which, as night was coming on, the two Kings mounted and departed together, without saluting the Archbishop. King Henry boasted as he rode that that day he had been avenged of his traitor. Some of the courtiers let the Archbishop hear them say that he was always proud, wise in his

own eyes, a follower of his own will and opinion ; that the worst thing that had happened to the Church was the choice of him for a ruler, and that through him she would soon be destroyed altogether, as she now was in part. The Saint made no reply whatever ; which shows, if one may venture to say so, how much good his exile had done to his spiritual life, and how much more his naturally vehement temper was under control than it was when he was subjected to similar reproaches at Northampton. He answered, however, his old friend John, the Bishop of Poitiers, "Brother, take care that the Church of God be not destroyed by thee ; for by me, by God's favour, it shall never be destroyed."

The majority even of his own followers were led away by the current feeling, and were jealous of losing the restoration to their homes, which had seemed just within their grasp. As they were riding away after the conference, the horse of one of them named Henry of Houghton,<sup>6</sup> who was riding just before the Archbishop, stumbled, on which the rider called out, loud enough for the Saint to hear, "Go on,—saving the honour of God, and of Holy Church, and of my order." Here again the Archbishop, much as he was pained, did not speak. When, however, they drew up to give their horses breath, the Saint said to his clerics : "Beloved companions, who have suffered every thing with me, why do you

<sup>6</sup> Fitzstephen, p. 96. This Henry of Houghton, or Hocton, relates a cure that he had obtained by the Saint's intercession (Benedict, p. 161).

so think and speak against me? Our return and restoration is but a little thing: the liberty of the Church, of which the King says nothing, is of far greater consequence. At length I will accept the best peace I can, but you never yet saw such short bargaining." Herbert, however, took a better tone, by reminding his master of the text, "Him will I honour who honoureth Me."

They arrived at Montmirail before the King of France. King Louis usually came to visit the Saint on his return, but to-day he did not do so. It was noticed that now, when, according to the threats of one of the earls after the conference, it was probable that France would no longer afford them shelter, the Saint was far more cheerful than usual. On the following day King Louis remained behind; but early in the morning the Archbishop left Montmirail for Chartres on his way back to Sens. As they went, people asked who it was that was going by; and when they heard that it was the Archbishop of Canterbury, they pointed him out one to another, saying, "That is the Archbishop who yesterday would not deny God or neglect His honour for the sake of the Kings." The fame of the conference had already spread far and wide. The Archbishop, who overheard what was said, was much touched, and looked at Herbert, who tells us that this frequently happened as they were travelling in France.

The Bishop of Poitiers was sent after the Saint to Étampes, to beg him once more, for the sake

of peace, to leave matters unreservedly to the King. The answer was as before, that he would do so, saving God's honour, and the order, honour, and liberty of the Church; but that he would promise nothing to the injury of the law of God. The Bishop returned to the King; and in order to pacify him, he modified the answer, saying, that the Archbishop would trust his cause to him above all mortals, but that he prayed him as a Christian prince to provide for the Church's honour and his own. Henry was overjoyed to accept such terms; and the Bishop wrote<sup>7</sup> to St. Thomas, telling him, that the King invited him to an audience at Tours on the feast of St. Peter's Chair, January 18th, about a fortnight after the conference of Montmirail. St. Thomas's answer,<sup>8</sup> which was a very affectionate one to the Bishop personally, refused absolutely any further conference, until, according to the Pope's command, he was freely restored to his Church and the royal favour. That this was not to be expected, was shown by the King's answer to the Pope's envoys, as by them described to the Pope, "That perhaps it might be the advice of his friends to restore him his Church, but that to take him back into favour he never would; for that then he should make void the privilege His Holiness had granted him, by which the Archbishop's power was suspended till he was taken back into favour."

When the King learned from Bernard de la Coudre that the purport of the Pope's second

<sup>7</sup> *Materials*, vi. p. 491.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 493.

commonitory letter was the restoration of the Archbishop's powers over himself and the kingdom, he secretly sent other messengers to the Holy See. Another conference of the two Kings was held, at which the Pope's envoys delivered the second letter. It was with the greatest difficulty that Henry could be brought to accept it by the persuasion of his councillors; but though they induced him to abandon the word *customs*, yet he still declared that the only terms on which St. Thomas might return in peace, were a simple promise, "in the word of truth, that he would do what his predecessors had done." They told him that the Archbishop would still require the insertion of his saving clause, and that he *could* not observe such things as the Pope had condemned at Sens, when he had been absolved from his obligation or promise to observe the customs. Henry then said that he would summon the Bishops of England, and consult with them, as he had usually done; but he refused to write any answer to the Pope. He left the Pope's envoys with anger, excepting Bernard de la Coudre, whom he took aside, promising to visit Grammont very soon, and to follow the advice of the Prior.

St. Thomas's full powers were now restored; but the envoys begged him not to use them until it was seen what effect the conference of Grammont might have.

At length, most thoughtful people perceived that St. Thomas was only acting with common prudence, when he refused to omit the *salvo* of

God's honour. Bernard of Grammont said to Herbert: "I would rather have my foot cut off, than that your lord the Archbishop should have made peace at that conference, as I and all the others advised him."

A still more important point was the return of King Louis to his former friendliness. The Archbishop's party went back from Chartres to Sens, which was a two days' journey. Three days after their arrival, they were talking together, and asking one another where they should go. The Archbishop was as cheerful as if he had no misfortunes, and he returned the condolences of the party with quiet laughter and pleasantry. "I am the only one aimed at; when I am disposed of, they will not persecute you, so seriously at least. Be not so alarmed." They assured him that he was the only one they were concerned for. "Oh," he replied, "I commit myself to God's keeping, now that I am shut out of both kingdoms. I cannot betake myself again to those Roman robbers; they are always despoiling the miserable. Let me see,—I have heard that they are a more liberal people in Burgundy near the river Saône. I will go there on foot with one companion; perhaps when they see us, they will take compassion on our forlorn condition, and give us subsistence for a time, till God interposes for us. God can help His own in the lowest misery: and he is worse than an infidel who distrusts God's mercy." No sooner was this said, than the mercy of God appeared at the very door. A servant of the King of

France requested the presence of the Archbishop at Court. "In order to expel us from the kingdom," exclaimed one of the party. "You are no prophet," said the Archbishop, "nor the son of a prophet: do not forbode evil." They went accordingly.

When they arrived, Louis was sitting and looking downcast; nor did he rise up, as his custom was, to meet the Archbishop. This was an ominous beginning. After a silence of a considerable time, the King bent his head down, as if he was reluctantly meditating the Archbishop's expulsion, and every one was in painful suspense, expecting the announcement, when all at once he sprang forward, and with sighs and tears threw himself at the Saint's feet, to the astonishment of the whole party. The Archbishop raised him up; and when he had recovered himself, he said, "O my lord, you were the only clear-sighted one amongst us." He sighed and repeated, "O my father, you were the only clear-sighted one amongst us. We were all blind, and gave you advice repugnant to God's law, and surrendered God's honour to the pleasure of a man. I repent, my father, I deeply repent. Pardon me, and absolve me from this fault. I offer myself and my kingdom to God and to you, and I promise henceforward, as long as I live, not to fail you or yours." The Archbishop gave him absolution and his blessing, and returned with his suite to St. Columba's abbey in great joy. And the King was as good as his word.

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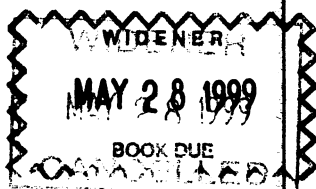


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